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THE EFFECTIVE EVANGELIST

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THE EFFECTIVE EVANGELIST

BY THE REV.
LIONEL B. FLETCHER

WITH A FOREWORD
BY THE REV.
ALFRED E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D.
PRINCIPAL OF HACKNEY AND NEW COLLEGES,
LONDON

INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR'S BROTHER
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DEDICATED TO
MY DEAR WIFE
MY COMRADE AND HELPER IN
MANY CAMPAIGNS

FOREWORD

By the REV. ALFRED E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D.
*Principal of Hackney and New Colleges,
London.*

It gives me great pleasure to be the first to welcome, and that very heartily, Mr. Fletcher's admirable book. To introduce and commend it where his work as an evangelist is known and valued would be an impertinence; but there are circles in all our churches who most need such a book as this, for whom my cordial appreciation may have some value. The blessing which has accompanied his work as an evangelist invests what he writes with authority. He combines knowledge and zeal, wisdom and earnestness, for his doctrine is based on a wide experience and an effective practice.

First of all, I desire to associate myself entirely with his plea that evangelism should have a larger and more honoured place in the activities of our

churches, and that it would be a great gain to our ministers if they all sought to do the work of an evangelist. As I have had opportunity I have striven to do this throughout my thirty years' ministry, and was doing it for nearly ten years before I entered on the ministry. Whatever is left undone, this must be done.

Secondly, I can express almost entire accord with what Mr. Fletcher writes as regards methods and principles. I mention a few slight differences of opinion only to show how close is the agreement. I should be more emphatic even than he is in affirming that training and scholarship are not a hindrance to effective evangelism; where that appears so, it is the fault of the man who cannot use his education aright. With him I most heartily detest the affectation of intellectual superiority to this kind of work which some ministers put forward as an excuse for their neglect of duty. When I began Christian work crude evangelistic methods were in vogue, which made both ministers and people unduly suspicious, so that the chaff was not winnowed from the wheat. Although once a month I had a distinctly evangelistic service in my church, closed any sermon which properly led up

to it with a personal appeal, and each winter conducted several missions in other churches, I never could bring myself to invite people to come forward at the close, there and then to make an open confession—although I gave opportunity for private conversation. I may have been wrong: conducted in this way, Mr. Fletcher thinks such a method may be entirely justified; certainly I intend to think over the question very seriously. Often when I have made the personal appeal I have felt deeply the desire to do more. What Mr. Fletcher suggests may be just the something more. He fully recognises the danger to the evangelist and the curse of “the numbering of the people.” I am doubtful whether the word “conversion” is the most appropriate to use in regard to children under twelve, but on the work among the young he writes very sanely, and supplies a corrective to those theorists who in their zeal for methods seem to forget the object of religious education.

Thirdly, I should like to add what Mr. Fletcher has not said explicitly, but what would, I am sure, command his assent, that there are many methods of spiritual influence besides that of evangelism;

and that there are religious experiences in which so conscious and decisive a change as conversion has had no place. As men live in Christ they know that they have been born again, but when, where, or how this life began they know not.

Because this book shows no hostility to modern theological and biblical scholarship, warmly advocates the social reforms in which a religious revival and moral reformation must issue, and is throughout loyal to the Church and the ministry, being animated by a most sympathetic and gracious spirit, I hope it will be read and pondered by all ministers and students, and will thus help to hasten what we so much need and desire, "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

ALFRED E. GARVIE.

*New College,
London.
1923.*

INTRODUCTION

By the Author's brother

DR. M. SCOTT FLETCHER, M.A. (Syd.) B.Litt. (Oxon.),
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IN accepting the invitation to write a brief Introduction to this work a frank confession is due to its prospective readers. I have not read the book myself—not the whole of it. Some of the earlier chapters alone have reached me here in Australia. But if I do not know the book, I do know the writer. Having been one of his teachers in his boyhood, and having had also some share in training him for the Christian ministry, I know what to expect. The message will be like the man—sincere, practical, inspirational.

If it were possible, by waving a magic wand, to put the clock back twenty-six years and carry my readers into the heart of the Australian "bush,"

they would see this evangelist, as I saw him, getting his first experience and gaining his first results in soul-winning. Lionel B. Fletcher, after a boyhood and youth crammed with adventure out of doors, was led¹ to enter the school of spiritual experience and of evangelistic work. The Teacher in that school remains ever the same—the Holy Spirit of God. The form and locality of the school changed from time to time. Sometimes it was a miners' camp among the hills, sometimes it was a sheep-station "out back" on the plains. Now it was a town "up country," next it was a city on the coast. He is still learning amid the crowded population of Great Britain. He would fain induce many others, through his message, to enter that school of evangelists and go on learning till the "last lesson and the long holiday."

It is noticeable that the writer does not deal with "evangelism" either as an abstract system or a piece of ecclesiastical organisation. He speaks throughout of the "Evangelist" or the preacher.

¹ The story of that "leading of Providence" has yet to be told. Some day, perhaps, the opportunity to describe the event, on the road between Peak Hill and Pine Ridge, will be afforded to someone in possession of the facts.

He is making a contribution to the study of personality in one of its manifold and possible developments. Moreover, he makes one feel that the true evangelist is one who is in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament, both in the kind of appeal which he makes and in the methods which he employs.

The evangelist is one who preaches (that is "proclaims as a herald") the good news of salvation through Christ. He is primarily a publisher of good tidings.

He also itinerates. An irresistible impulse drives him on to deliver his message of a possible deliverance from sin. He is a herald who tells of the conquering Christ and proclaims the victories of faith's advancing army. He gathers in recruits in every place to which he goes and stirs fresh loyalty to the King of kings.

Modern psychology justifies the methods of the evangelist so long as he keeps in harmony with Apostolic standards. Evangelism is not *per se* abnormal. It may be unusual—to our spiritual impoverishment. Let it be granted that this mode of religious propaganda sometimes takes on grotesque and repellent forms—as is the case in all primitive

and vigorous manifestations of life. But evangelism can be sane—healthily scriptural and spiritually scientific. It has a rightful place in every church and leads the van in every missionary advance against unbelief and heathenism.

Nor need it surprise one that the modern evangelist, in addition to his Apostolic message and journeyings, uses the magic of music as a potent method in his work. The “mission hymn”—whatever its defects—does two things: it conveys a doctrinal message easily remembered, and it awakens the moral and religious sentiment. The evangelist achieves some of his most notable results by appealing to the instincts and mass-movements of the crowd. All that M. Gustave Le Bon¹ says about the “collective mind” need not be accepted as psychologically correct, but it is undoubtedly true that individuals—as individuals—are more suggestible and responsive to appeal when part of a crowd than when in isolation.

The evangelist is right in seeking to stir the emotions of his hearers. But only as a means to an end. His final goal must be to capture the total personality of each possible convert, in the interests of right thinking and good living. The aim of

¹ *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind.*

evangelism should be ethical uplift. The one vulnerable spot in most hearers is on the side of emotion and sentiment.

The rationalising intellect and the stubborn will have their own peculiarly effective methods of resisting any direct approach to the stronghold of personality through them. Prejudice and habit are hard to dislodge. But feeling does respond to appeal. Let the evangelist go forward in this direction and seek to find a foothold in the effective part of his hearers. From that coign of vantage, once captured, he has some probability of convincing the mind and swaying the will. Should feeling be unresponsive, in the grip of indifference, there yet remains the way of approach through the unconscious. Every effective evangelist, as a matter of fact, makes his message suggestive to those processes of mind which rarely, if ever, emerge clearly into the consciousness of his hearers. He stirs the latent, dormant, sub-conscious self into life. By a subtle psycho-analysis there will be brought into the consciousness the motives (hidden or only half-suspected) which hitherto have swayed the sinner. "The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to

the dividing [or analysis] of soul and spirit . . . and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.”¹ Then the evangelist summons his awakened and convicted hearer to make a “full surrender” of the total personality to God. The appeal may be to fear, the lowest of the emotions, or it may be to love, the highest of all—till perfect love casts out fear. Into the surrendered life the divine power of the Holy Spirit will come flowing like a tide to regenerate and renew.

The evangelism of to-day needs, not a new message, but new methods—the truth of the message embodied in the thought-forms of the present generation and the organisation of believers adapted to modern conditions of life. The individual, indeed, must be rescued from sin, but never in the history of the world has Society so needed a Saviour.

M. SCOTT FLETCHER.

*Wesley College,
University of Sydney.*

¹ Hebrews iv. 12.

PREFACE

I SEND this book out with the sincere prayer that it may be of practical help not only to my brethren in the ministry, but to all who seek to win men and women to love the Lord Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth. It has been written during the strenuous days of the New Life Campaign in Great Britain, and is my response to very earnest requests from many of my friends in the ministry that I should set before them the way to become effective evangelists.

I owe a great debt to such men as Dwight L. Moody, Rev. Thomas Cook, Fred B. Smith, Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, Dr. R. F. Horton, M.A., and my own brother, Dr. M. Scott Fletcher, M.A., B.Litt.

I never saw Mr. Moody, but his books inspired me to make my first attempts at evangelism, and he has in some ways influenced my life more than anyone else except my own father. To Rev.

Thomas Cook I owe much, although I never saw him either. He was instrumental, during his Australian tour, in winning many of the chums of my boyhood to accept Christ as their Saviour and Lord, and through them I was stirred up to consider my ways. Then, after my conversion, it was a small book of his which pointed out to me the path along which I must tread. I was associated with Mr. Fred B. Smith when he came from America to Australia under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A. in 1905 to seek to win men for Christ. The inspiration I then received helped to mould my ministry as I went to my first church, and it abides with me to-day. I worked with Dr. Chapman through two great campaigns in Australia, and the work which followed in my own church at Port Adelaide proved to me that any minister who used a Mission as a beginning, instead of looking upon it as an end, could have the joy of seeing miracles performed by the grace of God, and could have his own ministry transformed and enriched. To Dr. Horton I look as my teacher in the prayer life, for, after reading one of his books at a crisis in my ministry, I stepped into the realisation that prayer alters things, and from then till now I turn back to that well-thumbed

book and thank God for the writer's example and teaching.

Most of all I am indebted to my brother, Dr. Scott Fletcher, in association with whom, away in scattered districts in Australia, I conducted my first Missions. It was then, in the first flush of my passionate desire to win men and women for Christ, that he helped to restrain and yet inspire me. A gifted evangelistic preacher, he soon showed me that scholarship and soul-winning ought to go hand in hand. Riding home with him through the bush in the brilliant moonlight after a Mission in some country church, many times he taught me more than he knew, and through his influence I have never been satisfied with anything but the best methods—as far as I knew them—of doing God's work.

If I have one desire which is greater than my desire to win souls to claim their right as the children of God, it is to set ministers of Christ on fire to include evangelistic work in their regular programme. My life has not always been lived in the atmosphere of a church. From sixteen years of age I have been somewhat of a wanderer on the face of the earth, and my unique experiences, first as a boy at sea,

then in the bush of Australia, afterwards in the gold mines of Queensland, and then in a journalist's office, taught me the supreme value of the work of a minister of the Gospel who dared go after the souls of men. I found that it was this type of preacher who influenced the life of the community most, and won respect from those outside the churches. I learned to hate cant and hypocrisy, the twin children of bigotry, and I found that living men of God were of more value than dead theories about God. I also learned that it is not the differences between individual thinkers which need emphasising or arguing about, for if battles are to be won it is wisest to find points of contact and agreement with the man alongside whom you are going to fight.

I am satisfied that the great majority of Christians could lead others to decision if they would exercise the God-given power which is theirs. In this book I have tried to set forth what I have personally proved to be true in my work as a minister and as an evangelist. Every suggestion made I have tested in one or all of the churches of which I have had the honour to be the pastor.

If what I have written is used of God to help

others to become definite winners of souls, then I shall be amply repaid for the work here attempted.

The chapter on "Personal Evangelism" and sections here and there in the early chapters of this book have appeared in articles contributed by me to *The Sunday School Chronicle*.

LIONEL B. FLETCHER.

20, *Memorial Hall*,
London, E.C. 4.

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CHAPTER I

THE NEED OF EVANGELISM

THAT there is intense dissatisfaction with the present state of the Church and its influence on the surrounding community-life of the nation no one will surely deny. It can be definitely affirmed that the most dissatisfied people of all are some ministers of religion. This is a healthy sign, for where complete satisfaction reigns improvement is impossible.

There are numbers of people who severely criticise the Church and ministers, but it is easier to find fault than to define methods whereby an improvement may be effected. On the other hand, weaknesses must be pointed out if strength is to be cultivated; faults must be discovered before they can be eradicated; and wrong methods must be exposed before they can be righted. Nevertheless, a mere wholesale condemnation of the Church, or mere fault-finding, is worse than useless. It is a habit easily cultivated, and perhaps popular as a means of winning applause from a gallery full of shallow thinkers, who will just as readily applaud a contrary sentiment to-morrow, if

that sentiment is expressed in a popular way. Along these lines valuable reforms will never come.

The past generation produced some strong evangelists, and Dwight L. Moody has almost universally been acclaimed as the greatest of these. Then followed many who considered themselves, or were considered by some admirers, to be men after Mr. Moody's own heart and who were thought to use his methods. But, as with all great leaders, the methods adopted often suffered in the hands of the copyists. Behind Moody's methods was Moody himself, strong, sane, spiritual, burning with love for Christ and tender in his compassion for sinners. It is said of him that he never preached about Hell without tears in his eyes and a sob in his voice.

The day of the great organised evangelistic campaigns dawned. An evangelistic Mission brought a team of workers to the place selected, each of whom was supposed to be an expert in some phase of religious work. Advertising on a huge scale was adopted, money was spent in fabulous amounts, "converts" were enrolled in thousands, and many people thought that the Kingdom of God was surely coming. But when the terrific strain and excitement of the special days passed, it was soon discovered that the heat of a large hall had to be exchanged for the atmosphere of a sparsely attended church, with its ordinary methods and its ordinary messages. A large percentage of the "converts" could never be

found, another large percentage had perhaps enrolled to shake off some persistent personal workers, and although there were always some cases of splendid conversion, the number was so small as to cause bitter disappointment and a reaction of feeling which sometimes brought disaster spiritually even to the local workers themselves.

Almost contemporary with these highly organised Missions, there has gone a movement like the cold blast of an east wind. It has taken the form of a steady enmity to all evangelistic effort. No doubt new views concerning the Bible, discussions concerning the Deity of Jesus, the era of Social-Gospel preaching (with more stress on the Social than on the Gospel) and the insane rush after money and social status, have all helped to give an edge to this freezing wind, but at its source it has arisen from a feeling of disappointment and distrust. The big evangelistic Mission has been disappointing, and disturbing to regular church life. The evangelist has not always been sane in platform utterance, or saintly in private life. The regular pastor has been hindered and not helped, while the regular church work has been handicapped instead of strengthened.

Now we are facing a new development. The movement against evangelistic emphasis has failed to produce any method of value for the enrichment of the Church by the gathering in of new recruits.

It is easier to destroy than to develop. Certain evangelistic methods may be ineffective in producing lasting results of real value, but in turning away from evangelism altogether a serious mistake has been made, and the Church is to-day anæmic as a consequence. The generation of stalwarts is rapidly passing away, and in many places there are few young people of outstanding ability to take the place of the older people who have been carrying on the work of God. The recruits for the ministry are fewer than ever, some colleges are almost half empty, criticism is general that in the Denominational Assemblies younger men are not being heard, nor are they coming forward to take the place of their elders who have borne the heat and burden of the day for so long.

The result is that we are once again swinging back from the preaching of principles to the desire for an authoritative ministry which shall call the dead to life, and enlist men and women under the banner of Christ. It is being felt that the evangelist is a necessity to the well-being of the Church and of the world, and a sense of intense longing for revival is pervading the Christian community. This new movement, which has steadily grown since the Great War came to an end, is attended with tremendous possibilities for good, but, unless wisely developed, may lead us into methods as unwise as those which caused such intense disappointment before.

That thousands are longing for, and praying for, a new breath from God is certain. That the answer to those prayers is already with us is also certain. Some circles have not felt that breath, and some people are strenuously setting their faces against any movement which may result in a return to what they imagine to be undesirable methods of work, or undesirable doctrines in preaching. Nevertheless the days of revival are upon us. As surely as the sun's rising is heralded by the glimmering of the dawn, and the tipping of the clouds with gold and scarlet, so the coming of a new day of spiritual interest is being announced by signs which the passionate lover of Jesus Christ cannot mistake.

There were those who thought that when the men came back from the war a revival would at once break out. Why they thought so is hard to imagine. But few could have conceived of the terrible sense of paralysis which temporarily seized the Church of God when the men had returned. For a time a feeling of hopeless and helpless despair took hold of many churches and many people. In some directions "stunt" services were tried, and other means were experimented with, in the hope that a free and easy Y.M.C.A. service, which was eminently suitable for Salisbury Plain or the fields of France, might fit the temper of the men. But undignified means never attract men for any length of time. The life of a Christian lends dignity to all that it touches, and

any method which detracts from the atmosphere of elevated spirituality ultimately fails miserably. There is something in the human instinct which demands the highest and scorns anything less. A slovenly dressed minister rarely attracts a working man, for of all people the workers are proudest of the appearance and calibre of their pastors and leaders. A mission hall is certainly more popular with some than a church in which architecture and exclusiveness have killed the family spirit of real religion, but it does not prove that anyone likes a bare hall better than a handsome and beautiful building. It only proves that the beauty of the wholesome spirit of cordial brotherliness is more attractive than the beauty of bricks and mortar, which may be as cold as the spirit of the people worshipping there.

“ Stunts ” suit days of “ stunts,” but the noblest work of which we know anything demands the noblest means being used for its permanent development. We failed in most of our schemes for welcoming the men back and gathering them into the churches because we thought more of the efficacy of “ Buns and Billiards,” to quote Rev. Samuel Chadwick, than of the power of a positive and revolutionising Gospel to satisfy the cravings of war-seared souls.

But the black days of disappointment and drift could not last. There were churches which did not lose their men as they returned from the war. These

had prepared a spiritual atmosphere to receive them, and into that atmosphere of peace and tenderness the men were attracted in hundreds. They wanted to forget the awful, hideous nightmare through which they had passed. War illustrations pained them, flag-waving jarred them, "stunts" reminded them too forcibly of bitter partings and camp surroundings. So into the prepared spiritual atmosphere created by the preaching of the love of Christ they passed as into a banquet hall, and there they found food for their starving spirits. While the number of these centres of activity and accomplishment was not many, they were numerous enough to attract attention, and gradually it was seen that if the Kingdom of God was to be brought nigh, it must be by a persistent and consecrated elevation of the spiritual. Praying people have been getting together to plead for a return of the days of blessing, and God has graciously vindicated His promises.

All eyes were on East Anglia because of the great work done there in 1921, but East Anglia was only one place of several in which harvests were being steadily reaped.

From East Anglia the revival was transferred to Scotland by the fisherfolk. Here again the newspapers, attracted by what they conceived to be sensations, advertised the work in the north by reports, many of which were garbled and many quite untrue. But God is glorified even through the satire

of men. Although the daily Press has taken no notice of it, and very little appears in the religious Press concerning it, the fact remains that many counties have been experiencing such days of blessing as have not been known for almost a generation, and, to-day, those whose lives are not altogether confined within the small compass of their own little church or denomination know that in very many centres a wonderful work of Grace is going on.

At the same time every minister in the land who is known to possess any special gift for, or experience in, evangelistic work is being inundated with pressing invitations to come and help his brethren gather in the harvest which seems ripe for reaping.

It is here that we face our gravest dangers. Three of these dangers which occur to our minds, and which may suggest others, must be considered.

(1) There is the danger of refusing to do anything.

It is true "there are none so blind as those who will not see," and perhaps such people will always exist, and will always remain a hopeless hindrance to the work of God. But there are others who are sincere enough to alter their views if it can be shown them that they are wrong. The most pitiable sight presented to God and man is the sight of a church or a community content to go on its feeble way when a wave of power is lapping at its doors.

This is no time to be arguing as to what form the revival will come in, or ought to come in. It is a day

for work, as well as prayer. It is a day for mending our nets and seeing to our boats, lest the fishing season passes and leaves us as poor as ever. There can be no excuse for doing nothing. To-day is a day for action, such as the day when "The Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." The churches, the ministers, and the religious Press, have an opportunity which is unique. The revival will come, but theirs will be a terrible responsibility if by their refusal to act the tide is hindered or the results are lessened. A slavish adherence to preconceived methods or ideas will tempt some to do nothing beyond what they are now doing. A prejudice against what are thought to be the accompaniments of evangelism will hinder others. A religious snobbery, which imagines that such work is only for certain uneducated classes, will retard a great many.

The wicked folly of all this is almost beyond description. When Wesley and Whitefield were leading the revival of the 18th century, all classes of the community were reached to some degree, and eventually every denomination felt the mighty impulse of the gracious work. To-day a feeling of pity is experienced as we read of those who refused to take advantage of God's gracious visitation then. The church which closed its doors to that rising tide of spiritual opportunity has ever regretted its

attitude, but God's work went on in a way which still astonishes the world.

There is room in the Kingdom of God for all kinds of methods, but there is no room for those who refuse to be about the Father's business.

(2) There is the danger of antagonism.

This is a real danger, and it is in evidence in every community. The antagonism of the world, or of vested interests which gain dividends from pernicious traffics, can never be escaped. If real revival comes, it will certainly mean revolution, all the more mighty because bloodless and spiritual. Such a revolution would hurl the drink traffic back into Hell. It would make the keeping of slum property by Christians impossible. It would scorch the complacent soul of any man, daring to call himself a Christian, who obtained revenue from houses used for purposes of sin. It would demand a new relationship between employer and employee. It would go deeply into the question of profits and fortunes made at the expense of the necessity of the poor and the people generally. In short, such a revival would revolutionise life and all its relations, making war and national jealousies hide their head. Nothing less than this will satisfy the enlightened hearts and minds of to-day, nor will Christ be satisfied with less, for He is surely more eager than we can be for the coming of His Kingdom. Therefore there will be antagonism even from some within the Church, and

from some churches too, in so far as they represent entrenched vested interests, or entrenched narrowness, which imagines that religion and life are divorced. The healthy Christian will not be afraid of this class of opposition. It will act as the blast of a trumpet calling the Hosts of the Lord to battle. To-day is a day for action, a day when the Church must be purified that the world may be saved. The spiritual battle is being joined, and as we swing ourselves into line, and present ourselves to the Lord in a new act of dedication, we shall be wise to estimate rightly the antagonism which will arise, and count the cost which will be demanded of us as we march into the fray.

Antagonism—powerful, rich, entrenched, official—is sure to be met, but if we begin to trim our sails at the beginning then the battle is already lost. The Kingdom of Christ can never come while we compromise on moral issues. If the revival is to bring in anything less than the Golden Rule, then let us look for something better whereby we can extend the Kingdom of our God. But we need not hesitate here, for only by winning men and women to accept Christ as their Saviour and Lord can we lay the foundation of that Kingdom for the coming of which Christ taught us to pray, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.”

We need Gideon’s proclamation at this juncture : “Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and

depart early from Mount Gilead." More than that, we must apply the Gideon test, for it is only the enthusiastic and whole-hearted who are going to be used of God in this tremendous crisis. Lying by the brooks and leisurely drinking when the battle is waiting for our presence and help is no occupation for the dedicated soldier of the Cross. Away then, for the trumpet of the Lord is sounding over hill and dale. The fiery slogan has gone forth, calling the tribes to battle. The blood-stained banner of the Cross is waving over the ranks of the true Children of God, as they march to win the world for Christ. What though the enemy encamped in the valley look like grasshoppers for multitude? Have not these entrenched hosts always rallied to oppose the work of God? But whenever the people of God have gone forth in His name and for His sake, as Gideon's three hundred did, they have been victors, though they may have been but a thin line of "contemptibles." So it shall be again.

The opposition which is most serious is that of good men and women, who imagine that evangelistic effort must be associated with narrow teaching and doctrines which, to them, are impossible. They say that new light and new learning have altered the outlook, theologically, and in other ways. Does this imply that their theological position has robbed them of the power to win men and women for Jesus Christ? If it has, then they may well reconsider

the position which they have taken up, for they are being tested in these days. Any teaching must be tested by the results which it produces, and if men who think they have found fuller truth and clearer light stand aside, and find little better to do than to criticise men, methods and doctrines with which they cannot agree, then they must excuse those who are doing the work if sometimes they show impatience, or even intolerance.

If God cannot find a man of college training to do His work just when He wants it done, then He will find a Moody, or a Spurgeon, for His work must be done. But when He finds a John Wesley, with college training and culture combined with consecration, then He moves a nation and transforms continents. If He cannot find an hotel, or a palace, which will welcome the birth of His Son, He will find a stable for Him to lie in, but His Son must be and shall be born. If He cannot find religious leaders who are ready to receive the Christ, and help Him to bring the real revelation of the Kingdom and salvation to the world, then He will gather a band of fishermen and others to do it, and set the Pharisees aside, but the work must be done and shall be done.

Personal opposition to evangelism, because the methods or the doctrines of certain evangelists have been repugnant to some types of mind, is as much the result of ignorance as the vindictive spite of intolerant people who ascribe infidelity to every

cultured mind which is seeking sincerely, even if mistakenly, to elucidate truth along fresh paths. Truth will out, wherever it comes from, in spite of all opposition, and surely God cares more for the salvation of men than we ever can. Un-Christly methods and criticisms, therefore, no matter how sincerely uttered, can never help the cause of Christ, but they can, and do, seriously embitter minds and retard the work of God. If evangelistic methods and teaching have been wrong, then get to work and set them right. When men who have rarely, if ever, had a seeking soul come to them for light or leading set themselves in opposition to men and methods which have won scores for the Kingdom, it savours of impertinence and self-satisfied impotence.

The world is sick to death of polished phrases which charm the ear but fail to touch the life. A well-groomed parson with a well-polished essay as his only contribution to the salvation of the world may be tolerated by inefficient and ineffective people, but men and women with iron in their blood are looking for a gospel which revolutionises individuals and communities, by challenging people to enlist in the highest and hardest service in the world.

There is no attempt here to assail any theological position, but there is a challenge to every sincere Christian to examine the real source of any antagonism he may feel towards evangelistic work. The

best way is to define candidly and set down in black and white the grounds of such opposition. Having done that, face this question: Is it not necessary in some way to enlist recruits for Christ? The answer must be, YES. Then answer this: Have you any method for enlisting recruits for Christ which has proved effective? If the answer is NO, then perhaps it would be better to refrain from antagonism until you have found a method. Or, if you have discovered a method, your advice in helping to improve methods to which you are opposed would be better than antagonism. A danger which is too real to be ignored is just this, that we may be guilty of sinning grievously against God if, through prejudice or personal preference, we adversely criticise or oppose work which has in past days brought tens of thousands into the Kingdom of God.

It is to be feared that at times the natural jealousy of the human heart fosters an antagonism which is altogether unjust and unchristian, and of this we may well beware. That kind of jealousy may not be apparent even to the one suffering from it, but the hidden depths of our unconscious personality may entertain such unworthiness. Well may we then bring all antagonism to Christ in humble prayer, to ascertain if it has His sanction, before we utter it or assist it either actively or passively.

That there have been past failures of a ghastly

nature attending certain evangelistic methods no more discredits sane evangelism than the ghastly periods of Church History discredit the real effectiveness of the work of the true Church.

At this critical juncture, all Christian people who have the real cause of the Kingdom at heart (and in spite of profession and protest there can be no true Christian void of this) may well review, in sincere earnestness, all methods which are likely to bring men and women to Christ. The indifference of the world, the unblushing parade of sin, the sight of stricken humanity, and the problem of the future development of international relationships, demand that the Church of Christ shall shake off her lethargy, and proclaim with assurance her evangel. We cannot hope to "muddle through" much longer. Then in God's name refrain from supercilious antagonism, and get into active accomplishment, lest you be found unworthy of the high calling wherewith you are called.

(3) There is the danger of using discredited methods.

Because of the keen blast of opposition to evangelism, it has to be admitted that many ministers find themselves facing a period when there is undoubtedly a wave of evangelistic desire sweeping through the Christian world, but they themselves are conscious that they cannot do the work which needs doing. The reason of this is not far to seek.

Yielding to the popular swing away from evangelistic methods, men have not been trained to do evangelistic work. It can be said with truth that the number of men in the ministry who have ever done this class of work, or who know how to do it, is so small that to-day the churches seem to be in a dilemma. Many ministers themselves are perplexed as to how to proceed. There is the consciousness, in many places, that "the fields are white unto harvest," but the problem is how to get the harvest reaped. The situation is urgent, and its very urgency carries with it a grave danger.

The Rev. Oscar L. Joseph, in *Essentials of Evangelism*, states this danger as follows: "It is largely due to our nervous desire for short cuts and quick results that there is a growing tendency to hire some outsider to do the work of evangelism. The professional evangelist no doubt has his place, but it is a very limited and subordinate place. Those who look to him so eagerly, tacitly acknowledge their own incapacity or rather their negligence. The Protestant Church has surely fallen on evil times, when it thinks more of the spectacular appeals of the itinerant Gospeller than of the all-round work of the settled ministry. It is really a reflection on the failure of the preacher *and* the people. This stigma cannot be removed by resorting to clap-trap, with the inevitable displays of vulgar ribaldry and the obnoxious heckling over financial profits. The whole

business is unethical, not to speak of it being tragically unspiritual. The popular evangelist invariably represents the reactionary and obscurantist forces in the Church. . . . He is more like the seller of patent medicines than like the duly qualified practitioner."

This is an almost brutally candid criticism, but it contains such an arresting setting forth of a necessary warning that it is quoted here. There may be some things stated by Dr. Joseph with which all of us would not agree, nevertheless the warning is especially needed now.

Many earnest and consecrated men have in times past tried methods of evangelism which resulted in disappointment and reaction. We have already touched on this, but let us beware lest we repeat the mistakes of a past generation. Evangelism is condemned in some quarters, solely because of the methods which have been associated with it. There is a great responsibility, therefore, resting on those who are eager for evangelism to-day, lest, in their eagerness for "short cuts and quick results," they again hinder the work of the Kingdom, and handicap the coming revival by using discredited methods. That these methods are discredited will be hotly denied in some quarters, but time cannot be spent in discussing that here. Let us approach the whole matter in the spirit of Christ, and let us give credit for sincerity to all who love our Lord and long for

the coming of His Kingdom. With that in view, this book will seek to be constructive, and to point a way whereby the effective evangelist may be produced. If in doing that the way of effective evangelism is seen and followed, then surely dangers which past experience has pointed out to us will be avoided.

CHAPTER II

THE NEED OF EFFECTIVE EVANGELISTS

THERE are three quotations which we shall consider here at the beginning of this new chapter.

Henry Drummond, in *The New Evangelism*, says : " If men are not influenced or impressed under preaching, the only alternatives are, either that the Gospel in substance is not the power of God unto Salvation, or that the Gospel in form is not presented to them so as to reach them."

Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A., in *Evangelicalism : Has it a Future?* says : " The maintenance of the evangelical spirit is impossible without a central conviction. That conviction has been expressed with incomparable directness by St. Paul. ' The faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me.' If you alter this central conviction, you alter everything. . . . On the one hand there are those who do not exalt the Deity of Christ nor emphasise the deed of the Cross. Theirs is often a vague religion. It is more like a mist than a fountain of cold water. What the thirsty man craves is not a moist atmosphere but a full draught. . . . Evan-

gelicalism claims that miracles of the Spirit happen, that a spiritual miracle may happen and ought to happen in every soul; not necessarily a dramatic miracle, but a real one. If miracles of the Spirit do not happen, either in a quiet way or a striking way, it is impossible to conceal the fact. The salt has lost its savour. It is good for nothing. It ought to be trodden down. It is despised."

Rev. Samuel Chadwick, in *Evangelism: A Re-interpretation*, says: "All life is a gift. It can neither be bought nor won. All life comes by birth. It cannot be either organised or evolved. Spiritual life is no exception to these universal laws. . . . Evangelism is concerned with its birth. . . . In every birth there is something personal, incommunicable, unique. The Gospel of life despairs of none. . . . Sometimes we are asked what Jesus Christ has to offer to honourable, cultured, refined people, who do not swear, gamble, drink, or follow after lust. The answer is: Life! They smile and say they are not dead, but very much alive and quite satisfied. So the Jews answered Jesus. They denied His facts; and they are still denied. They deny they are dead, but have they Life? Do they know God? Have they an experimental knowledge of Him? Are they assured of sonship in Christ? Have they conscious fellowship with Him? Have they the Life, the true Life, that is Life indeed? 'This is the true Life that is in His Son; and he that

hath the Son hath the Life, he that hath not the Son hath not the Life ' (John v. 12). That is the Law of the Spirit of the Life in Christ Jesus."

A great many preachers describe themselves as " teachers," and sometimes there is an air of (maybe) unconscious superiority when " a teaching ministry " is used to define the work done by certain men.

Then again, it is undoubtedly a fact that the name " Evangelist " is to-day almost a title of reproach in the mouths of some people. It seems to denote a man who cannot teach; a preacher of lower mental calibre or training than " a teacher." Official Christianity is largely to blame for this. If a man is being used for ministerial work who has not yet qualified by training and examination for ordination, he is often designated " an evangelist." If a man is very earnest in his preaching, but rather crude in his presentation of truth, and perhaps unfitted for prolonged work in one centre, then he is sometimes set aside as " an evangelist " to conduct special meetings wherein his earnestness and piety will find useful scope. A church which is known as " one of our best churches " may have a Mission church connected with it, but situated in a working-class district. The Saturday newspapers insert advertisements announcing the preacher and his profound subjects for the church itself; but for the Mission church the service is almost always advertised as " evangelistic."

Further, we have a wandering class—many of whom have been, and are, excellent men of gifts and character—who are responsible to no church organisation or authority. They may have had no special training or education; but some of them undoubtedly possess certain gifts of bringing people to decision. These are universally called “evangelists.” If their methods are unwise, their teaching crude, their style sensational, or their manners unpolished, then this is for ever associated in the minds of some people with the name of “evangelist.”

The Church of Jesus Christ to-day is suffering from this loose use of a magnificent word; and the time has arrived when this reproach must be removed. This will come about when the necessity and urgency of evangelism being lifted to the highest plane of church life is recognised by those who train students for the ministry, and by those who hold official positions in our denominations. This seems to imply revolution. It does. A revolution in our Church-thinking and attitude towards many things ministerial is not only needed: it is imminent.

What is an evangelist? To put it simply, he is a “harvester.” A man who went in for farming, but made no provision for gathering or storing his harvest at set times, would be looked upon as a lunatic, and would come to a lunatic’s end. The same thing is true of our church life. If the churches do not exist for harvesting, and if the preachers are not trained

to reap a harvest for the Kingdom of God, then what are they there for?

Some churches talk about their "tradition," or their "atmosphere," but the fact remains that no church fulfils its true function which does not in some way reap the harvest which its work brings to fruition. It can also be affirmed with confidence that one of the reasons why some churches are empty is that year after year harvest after harvest has ripened but has never been reaped. In this way valuable work has been wasted because its results have not been conserved and used for the work of the Kingdom.

Imagine a farmer who said his function was to sow. Year by year he prepared his soil, sowed his seed, and after his corn had come to head, again set about ploughing and sowing, without first reaping the result of his past toil. Such a thing is so ridiculous as to be unthinkable; yet this is what actually happens in many churches. One reason may be that some preachers have the idea that to preach is to teach principles of conduct, forgetting that the basis of true conduct is relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ, without which the principles of Jesus can never be rightly lived. The true Christian is a re-born man or woman who, having come into living relationship with God through Jesus Christ, has received Divine power, by which the Christ-life is lived and Christian principles are rightly understood and translated into action. Principles of living,

without the power of living them, are of little value; and if the teaching of the New Testament is true, then the natural man is powerless in the grip of his sinful nature, and needs a miracle of Grace to be performed in him before the principles of Jesus become intelligible or effective.

The true preacher of the Gospel, therefore, is constantly seeking to bring his hearers into right relationship with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is union with Christ which is so essential, as in Him we find the Father and can understand the Father. Just as the branch is grafted into the vine, so must men and women be grafted into Christ Jesus. The branch bears the fruit, but the nourishment and life come from the vine. "I am the vine," says Christ, "ye are the branches."

The demand for to-day is reality. Men in the street recognise that the principles of Jesus are the noblest of which they have any knowledge; but the criticism which they level at the Church is that that institution is not producing men and women who are living those principles. War still blazes its blood-soaked trail across the life of the world. The drink curse still impoverishes and enslaves its millions, while many so-called Christians make their dividends out of this agent of hell. Slums still reek with filth and send child-life to the grave in almost countless thousands each year. Lust still drives its filthy trade, hurling armies of girls and women, who were

once pure, into graves dug by the passions of degraded men. Gambling still hardens the hearts of people, transforming men and women into cruel robbers of each other, while the rich and noble, as well as the poor and hard-working, are enslaved thereby. Even some churches enrich their coffers and kill their spirituality by its seducing methods. Traders become rich at the cost of the need of the poor; and profits made at the expense of the masses can still be added to a professing Christian's balance sheet with little fear of serious condemnation from many pulpits. Are then the principles of Jesus just the dreams of a mystic? Or is there some secret we have yet to learn by which those dreams may be transformed into living reality?

"Reality! Reality! Give us reality!" This is the cry of the perplexed world to-day. But nowhere can reality be found where the power to live the Christ-life is absent.

Here is a challenge to the pulpit which might well make the pulses of healthy men beat fast with the thought of its daring and adventure.

In the days of the Great War, those who took the recruiting platform were not satisfied with stating principles, or with teaching the people what it meant to be Britishers. They called for action. They called for recruits. They insisted on the necessity of a verdict from those who listened to them or read their writings; and the verdict was to be given in

lives devoted to the cause of fighting for freedom. The nation might have been swamped by the in-rushing armies of the enemy while men and women were discussing the value of principles. Therefore the source of power was indicated as being in changed lives. Men, the best men, the daring men, the brave men, were challenged to prove their value by instantly turning their backs on the freedom enjoyed as ordinary citizens, and by accepting the limited life of soldiers. In this new life they would no longer seek to do their own will, but the will of their leaders. Thus a great object was to be achieved. They signed away their individual freedom that they might secure the freedom of the world.

That was the cry. And to that cry millions responded. A harvest of lives was gathered and placed at the disposal of instructors whose business it was to teach the most effective way of acting as soldiers of the great army. The call to service came first; the teaching of the implication of service came next. Recruits were enlisted immediately. Instructors found their opportunity afterwards.

The teaching ministry is of the highest value, but recruits are needed immediately; for every recruit is sworn to do his best to carry out the instructions given by the teachers. The preachers who imagine that the majority of their hearers are already recruits are making a fatal mistake. Assent to principles may be followed by no action on the part of the

hearers. In fact, it is rarely followed by action, unless the hearer is qualified to receive instruction.

But there is a mighty harvest of recruits waiting to be gathered. Our Sunday Schools have been preparing them. So have our godly homes and our spiritual preachers and writers. The fact remains that much of the harvest is being wasted—sadly wasted—through inexperience, or through blindness, or through ignorance.

Young manhood and young womanhood are eager for the challenge to win the world for the highest; but they are waiting for preachers with passion, and conviction, and white-hot sincerity, to issue the challenge and to provide the leadership. Where such leadership is forthcoming the response is also forthcoming. In the absence of such a challenge and such leadership thousands of our best turn away to other things, by which they seek to find satisfaction for the hunger within their souls. Then self-indulgent middle age is entered upon, and the rich days of youth are left behind, and it is too late for the high adventure which needs the impulse and eagerness of youth to carry it through.

If we have ears to hear, and eyes with which to observe; if we are not entirely immersed in gratifying our own taste for mental feasting; if we are not mistaking the academic surmises of unpractical recluses for the real need of the work-a-day people who form the vast majority of our nation, we who

are preachers will cry to God in these days of crisis. Our cry will be to be made harvesters, that we may gather a mighty army of manhood and womanhood into conscious relationship with Christ, that as the sons and daughters of God they may be ready to be instructed in the teaching of Jesus. Then with power supplied by God's Holy Spirit they will go forth to apply that teaching to the world's life to-day.

The preacher's first duty, therefore, is to see that union with Christ which produces life is brought about in his hearers. Men and women are seeking for spiritual life. Within each human heart there is a longing for something definite. The mere setting forth of principles of conduct to ordinary people is lost on them, for they are conscious of the lack of power to put those principles into action. Awaken a soul, however, to the fact that such a thing as union with the Divine is possible, and that such union brings life, and that such life means power to achieve the seemingly impossible, and immediately that soul sees opening before it the satisfaction of a life-long craving.

Has the preacher taught principles? Undoubtedly! But has he ever asked for the enlistment of men and women under the banner of Christ, who will consciously accept the life which He offers, carrying with it the power to put those principles into daily action? If he has, then he is an evangelist, for he

has been reaping in the harvest of prepared souls for the Kingdom of God.

Can there be any grander work than that of persuading men and women consciously to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, their Lord, their Light, and their Leader? Let the preachers then get to that work. Let the sermons blaze out with passionate entreaty each Sunday; and recruits will come in so fast that, for the man who wants opportunity for his teaching ministry, the week will be busy enough in teaching those principles which Christ would have us apply to our daily lives.

Teaching principles to corpses in a graveyard would not be calculated to produce a virile manhood; but teaching principles to an eager, living band of aroused men and women certainly would result in a great stream of enlightened and empowered people going out to transform the world.

If Christ came here to teach us anything, it was this, that men and women must be born again before they can possibly understand the will of God or have power to carry it out. Call the dead to life, then, ye preachers of the Gospel, and fill your class-rooms with the living who wish to learn. Your ministry will then become the source of new life, helping to bring in the Kingdom of God and to transform the world.

At once the question is asked: "How is this particular work to be done effectively?" We may

refer again to Dr. Joseph's book: "What is the conspicuous message of the Church? This is not a declaration of propositions but the proclamation of a living Person of exceptional power and incomparable Grace." Here we have the first essential for the preacher who really desires to win his hearers for Christ. Even as real conversion is impossible until the human life is brought humbly to the feet of Christ, so it is impossible for preachers to become evangelists until they are willing to surrender themselves, with their preconceived ideas, into the hands of the Holy Spirit, to be used utterly for this great and noble work.

When Silvester Horne said, "Our Gospel is not the survival of the fit, but the revival of the unfit," he stated the case in his own concise way, but Principal P. T. Forsyth's equally pithy statement might well be put alongside of it, when he said that the ancient Prophets responded to the summons with the quick answer, "Here am I," but the modern Prophet speaks out of confusion and despair and asks, "Where am I?"

Evangelism is impossible without a definition note of certainty and authority. No man has any right to allow his study to come between him and his people. Whatever he is sure about, or whatever he is still in doubt about, he must have this certainty, that his chief mission in life is to bring men and women into living, loving relationship with God.

With that conviction, there must go the further conviction, that in Christ, and only in Him, can the human soul find the Father.

Without any thought of uncharitable criticism, it must at once be said that intellectual pride will always kill the desire to be an evangelist, or the power to be an evangelist, in any preacher. The man who leaves College obsessed with the idea that his greatest work is to preach to intellectual people who will be able to appreciate his great fund of knowledge, and who thinks that that is the highest and most desirable position to which he can attain, has lost (if he ever possessed) the greatest vision which ever came to his soul.

Jesus said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He said again, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

In our religion there should be the same intense spirit which characterises other things about which we are intense enough. The love of our country, the love of our parents, the love of our children, demand no apology from us; why then should there be any hesitancy in expressing love for our King, Christ Jesus? We may differ in our ways of expressing our thoughts and beliefs; our minds may be cast in varying moulds; our training may have been widely different; our characteristics may be vastly dissimilar; our temperaments may vary considerably;

our tastes may lead us in opposite directions; but there is one thing essential to all preachers of the Gospel. There is one foundation which must be there. There is one spirit which must actuate the whole, burning with increasing heat and intensity, and that is a passionate loyalty to our King, Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son of the Father, our Saviour, our Lord, and our Master !

If there be any hesitancy about this, if there be any lukewarmness with regard to this, if the faintest suspicion of disloyalty creeps in here, at once the strength goes from our arm; immediately the power departs from our message, and like a flash we are stricken with palsy. Under such conditions we do not see men flocking to the standard in response to our appeal, problems crop up like weeds in a garden, the battle wavers and the lines break.

Loyalty to Christ's Glorious Person is essential; but with it there comes a demand for loyalty to His methods and commands.

We are constantly praying for Revival, but that prayer will be answered as soon as we have sufficient men of conviction who will dare to carry out Christ's instructions without reserve. "Go ye therefore and make disciples," stands as our commission for all time, and anything less than that is disloyalty to Christ.

The Church is in greater need of consecrated men, who will dare put this command in front of them as

the one great object of their lives, than of anything else. Scholars we have in abundance, and apparently our present method of training men for the ministry will result in their number being steadily added to, but with all respect to those in the seats of learning, it may be said that passionate conviction and a message of authority will arrest attention, attract an audience, and change the lives of the hearers, where cold scholarship by itself will fail. The ideal is to add scholarship to earnest conviction, then the effective evangelist of the best type is bound to appear. What remains for him to learn will come naturally, as he adapts himself to circumstances, adopts wise methods, and, above all, keeps his soul aglow through personal intercourse with the Divine.

All kinds of methods have been tried with the object in view of extending the Kingdom of Christ, but the fact remains that steady decline in church membership is always recorded as the evangelistic activity of the church declines. However the work is done, the fact has to be faced, that there can be no real addition to the number of those who are members of the living Church, unless people are brought to accept and confess Christ as their Saviour and Lord. Nominal membership there may be, but true, vital relationship with God there cannot be without effective evangelism.

One ideal set before us has been the winning of

the children through improved Sunday School methods. But even this cannot take the place of seeking to save those who are lost. There is almost unanimous approval of the best Sunday School methods to-day, and rightly so, but, with all our approval in this direction, the fact of a decline in the number of children coming to Sunday School has caused grave anxiety in all denominations. This too can be attributed to a decline in evangelistic preaching, for where the parents are not themselves converted, the children are not likely to have behind them the spiritual influence of a home-life which will ally itself to Sunday School work, and so make it truly successful.

Effective evangelism would revive the whole Church with its multitudinous activities. It would greatly add to church membership, it would fill our schools with men and women determined to permeate the whole of the school organisation with a deep spirituality, making all modern methods of instruction a medium for a mighty harvest of souls. It would provide countless numbers of active, passionate preachers for necessary open-air work and so bring the Gospel to millions outside the church walls. It would fill our Colleges with young preachers of conviction and passion, eager for all the added equipment that scholarship could give to them, whose main attraction would not be salary or status, but souls for the Kingdom. It would revive missionary

interest, and incidentally help to solve the burning problems of the day, such as international relationships, class jealousies, and social injustices.

It has done all this in the past, and the blackest pages in the history of the Church and of the world have been those when the fire of evangelism has died out or burnt low. Yet, with the perversity of human nature, we turn again and again to other methods and expedients, only to find heart-break and bitter disappointment. The Gospel of Christ, with the Atonement as its essential centre, has always become a stumbling-block. It offends our pride, it insults our self-sufficiency, it humbles our conceit : nevertheless the Cross of Christ stands as the meeting place, and the only meeting place, of God with man, and back to it we must come for our cleansing and power. Not all will agree with this, therefore not all can become effective evangelists.

There are cold reasoners in abundance, there are ethical essayists in profusion, there are scholarly lecturers all over the world, but the challenge to-day is for men who will take upon themselves the reproach of Christ, that they may win the people of the world to love Him. Paul ranged himself there, and we must learn his secret : " But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and

do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ " (Phil. iii. 7-8).

Thus was he enabled to exclaim later on in the same Epistle (Phil. iv. 13): " I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

That is the spot to which all must come as the starting place, then God will reveal in them His mighty purpose and power, and the effective winner of souls will have commenced his career, a greater than which cannot be found, for his ministry will result in scores of men and women experiencing the miracle of Redemption.

CHAPTER III

THE EVANGELISTIC GIFT

IN Proverbs x. 5 we read, " He that gathereth in summer is a wise son " (R.V. Margin, " A son that doeth wisely,") " but he that sleepeth in harvest causeth shame."

There are several other passages in Scripture which are well worth considering on this point. Here are three of them :—

" He that winneth souls is wise " (Proverbs xi. 30), or " He that is wise, winneth souls " (R.V.).

" And they " (" the teachers," R.V. Margin) " that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever " (Daniel xii. 3).

" Let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins " (James v. 20 (R.V.).

The main things in the life of a preacher are his conversion, his call, his gifts and his training. Even as all the colours combine in forming what we call " Light," so must the conversion, call, gifts and

training of a preacher of the Gospel combine to bring light to the lives of the people to whom he ministers.

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to preachers doing evangelistic work is the doubt as to whether they possess the evangelistic gift. In their perplexity, they turn aside from this particular branch of their work to devote themselves to their ministry in other directions, and then either souls are rarely won at all, or a stranger is brought in to do the work which should be the crown of the preacher's own ministry.

There is no suggestion here that help should never be sought for special seasons. This will be touched on in a later chapter. What is contended, is that most ministers have the evangelistic gift, and if this can be proved to them, and they can be persuaded to use it, then the work of the Church will be revolutionised, and the sanest and safest era in evangelism will have been entered upon.

It is hard to imagine the disciples in New Testament days going out to their work not expecting to win souls to definite surrender to Christ. Take up the book of Acts, and as you read it through, try and think of Paul or Barnabas being satisfied with the delivery of eloquent sermons. If they had rested content with such a ministry, the book of Acts would be dull enough reading, and the Church of Christ would never have been established. It must be very gratifying to know that men quote your

scholarship, or háng on your translation of Greek sentences, but if that is the highest and grandest work of the Christian ministry, then it is no wonder the world shrugs its shoulders as a ministerial collar appears, or passes the doors of our churches with a smile of indulgence, looking upon them as confectioners' shops for the doling out of sweet morsels to benevolent and harmless lunatics.

The romance of the New Testament is the revelation which it gives of the acts of the Holy Ghost through very ordinary—and sometimes through extraordinary—men, transforming sinners into saints, and sending out unknown individuals to revolutionise the lives of countless thousands.

Throughout the Bible there are passages such as have been quoted at the beginning of this chapter which serve to show how important the writers and teachers, inspired by the Holy Ghost, thought the salvation of souls to be. Jesus Christ when He was leaving this world told His followers to "make disciples." What right then has a man to be in the ministry who thinks he has no gift for this work? Or what is it but terrible sin when a minister deliberately turns from such work or adversely criticises those who strive to do it?

Thank God it is not opposition, but the sense of inability which keeps most preachers from definitely seeking to bring people to make the great surrender to Christ. But men can be brought to decision, they

ought to be brought to decision, and what is more, they are waiting to be brought to decision, and there is no one in such an unique position to do this work as the minister of the Gospel in his own church.

A church is in an ideal condition when it is experiencing a steady and regular flow of new members into its communion on confession of faith. Someone has said, "We need not a spurt, but a spirit of evangelism," and this is the mark of all truly successful churches. A popular preacher gathers a congregation, but an evangelistic ministry builds a church which stands after that particular ministry has ended and long after the popular preacher's crowd has either followed him elsewhere or has floated off looking for a new sensation.

Among many ministers the direct work of bringing men and women to conviction concerning their sin, and to conversion through Christ Jesus our Lord, has gone out of fashion, and some people hate anything like an approach to evangelistic work. But heed them not. People are as eager and ready for this work to-day as they ever were; in fact the Church to-day is starving for men who know how to win souls and who dare to put their knowledge into operation. It is certain that if the average minister knew the opinions, which are expressed freely enough in his absence, concerning his average preaching and how devoid it often is of the message which is longed for, there would be hundreds of

preachers on their knees pleading with God to teach them how to win souls.

The whole cry of the Bible is for sinners to come to God. All through its pages there is a yearning, as if God is breaking His heart over the sins of men, and we know that in Christ He did break His heart because of sin.

A ministry devoid of a like passion for the souls of men is tragic, for it has missed the mark, and, no matter what its fame or popularity, is a pitiable failure. Preaching ought to be so intense as to prove to the hearers that the preacher is linked with God in an utter longing for the salvation of men and women. It ought to be of such a character that the hearers will know that the preacher is determined to be free of the guilt entailed by the neglect of his hearers to accept Christ as their Saviour.

The plain fact is that death—spiritual death—stares every man and woman in the face, and the work of the preacher is to rescue them and lead them into life. Either this is true or the Bible is false and our whole church organisation is a waste of money and a hoax. The Church does not exist to provide a professional class with a means of livelihood and a social status, but it does exist to bring life to the people, and to prove to them that real life is expressed in deeds radiant with the blessing and the spirit of Christ.

To the preacher, therefore, who believes this, and

who is anxious to do his work most effectively, there comes a longing to know what is the best way to proceed. The fact that so many ministers and churches are quite willing to call in a preacher who is known to be experienced and gifted in evangelistic work, so that the harvest may be reaped, proves that many are eager for the work to be done.

But the evangelistic gift is not the exclusive possession of a few men specially endowed by Heaven, it is a gift possessed by most people who have come into living union with Christ. Doubtless, as in other things, some are more gifted than others, but that does not preclude the possibility of all who so desire doing their best in their degree. The greatest danger is the failure to attempt such work at all.

There are certain spiritual conditions, which will be dealt with in a later chapter, without which real success can never be achieved. In fact, unless the whole work is grounded on a pure, spiritual conception it must finally end in disaster. But before dealing with the more spiritual source of power, we shall look at the human standpoint, so that some who at present think themselves unqualified to attempt evangelistic work may be led to see themselves as they really are, and so perhaps feel it worth their while to go thoroughly into all aspects of the call to evangelism.

In intimate conversation with preachers, it is

astounding to find how many began their work burning with the passion to win souls. In fact, it may be stated with confidence that most men in the pulpits to-day, who began their work after experiencing real conversion, went out with the overwhelming desire and determination to bring people to conviction and lead them to conversion. Many of them now look back on these early ventures with a smile, and are almost inclined to think with pity of those first "crude attempts," as they often call them.

The reality is, a young convert, child-like in the simplicity of his utter faith, has truths concerning the Kingdom, and facts concerning the power of God, revealed to him which are missed by those who become worldly-wise. Surely Jesus meant it when He said: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke xviii. 17). Again it is worth our while to ponder His statement when in prayer He said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes" (Luke x. 21).

The work of a young convert, going out to preach in the first flush of his new-found love and zeal, may be looked upon with an indulgent patronage by some people, and stories of the conversions he reports may not be taken seriously as indicating

anything very important. Nevertheless, it is of the greatest importance, and tragedy begins when such an earnest and consecrated zealot loses his ardour and is eventually diverted into other lines of preaching by older men who have themselves lost their first glow, or who have had their power taken from them in consequence of their worldly-wisdom. If a careful inquiry is made, it will be found that the proportion of young, untrained preachers who obtain conversions is far greater than the proportion of trained ministers who win men and women to an open confession of Christ. This does not prove that wise training is not good, but it does prove that the gift of evangelism is much more common than is supposed. The pity of it is that so many who have the training of such admirable material think first of the enrichment of the mind with learning, and sometimes forget that the enrichment of the spiritual life is of far greater importance. Great as is the need for the most careful training in things of the mind, greater still is the need for devout training in the things of the soul, and, because in so many cases this order has been reversed, many men with brilliant academic records are helpless when faced by the soul-hunger of "the common people."

The first impulse of a truly converted individual is to bring other individuals to Christ. This is always the mark of a Revival, and in all evangelistic work it is touching to notice how night after night

new converts will come to the front bringing a friend or a relative to register the decision which they themselves have already recorded. Then notice the first attempt at an address given by a young Christian, and you will perceive that the note of appeal is always prominent. Speak to a young man who is anxious to enter definite Christian work, and you will find in the days of his first impetuous eagerness that his main idea is to be an evangelist. Go into a Mission church, or into some small country church served by budding preachers who are sent there to deliver their first sermons, and in the majority of cases the address is an exhortation to accept Christ. What is more, wherever there is the bold daring of simple faith, as yet unspoiled by the mysterious questionings of the student, appeals are not only given, but conversions are expected and obtained.

It is quite safe to say that there are ministers of considerable reputation who would be amazed if they found half a dozen or more people in their vestry after an ordinary evening service, asking to be prayed with and helped to begin the Christian life. And yet there are hundreds of Mission halls and insignificant places of worship where mere lads or laymen often have this experience and look upon it as a normal result of a faithful presentation of a positive truth.

The evangelistic gift, like any other gift, may perish through neglect, but, as with other things, it

can be developed to a wonderful extent when its presence is recognised and its powers are exercised.

Speaking from personal knowledge I will name four groups, among many which could be cited, with whom I have been associated in a more or less intimate degree, who afford wonderful illustrations of the universality of the gift of evangelism.

Group No. 1 consisted of five young men, all from cultured homes, all of whom were converted in the same evangelistic Mission. The oldest was not more than twenty-one years of age. They agreed to meet once each week for prayer in an old summer house in a garden. There they formed the idea of winning 150 souls for Christ. Why they selected that particular number I cannot say, but the fact remains that that was their goal. They set out to do this particular work in twelve months, and they did it. Striking the personal note, I caught my first flame of evangelism from that group, although I was not one of their number. I used to watch them with something akin to awe as they went into that summer house week by week. I followed one of them into the pulpit of a small country church the week after his visit. The people told me that he seemed to forget his sermon, and frankly told them so, but leaning over the pulpit he said, "There is one thing I can tell you about, and that is the love of Christ my Saviour," and the telling brought a group of men and women into the Christian life that night.

The awe and wonder of his visit pervaded that little church on the Sunday I was there in a remarkable way, and it set something on fire within me which I pray God may never go out.

Group No. 2 consisted of another band of young men. They were a mixed lot. One was a school-master; a second was a mill hand; the third served behind the counter of an ironmonger's shop. How many of them there were altogether, I cannot now remember, but this I do know, that through that group, in the space of one short year, a dozen small churches were set ablaze, and hundreds were led to confess Christ. I can to-day point to ministers and missionaries in active service who were converted through their work.

Group No. 3 consisted of men who were comparatively unscholarly, as far as our standard of scholarship goes. Their leader was a man who got on fire for Jesus Christ when he was more than sixty years of age. He gathered several other men around him, one a converted burglar, another an ex-gambler, and a third an equally notorious character who had been brought into the Kingdom during a Mission held in their town. They set themselves the apparently impossible task of telling every man, woman and child in their centre of population—about 7,000 in all—of the wonder of Christ's love at least once every year. With the sublime audacity of childlike faith they set out on their task. They

bought suitable literature, they organised services in communities farthest from a place of worship, they visited homes in their spare time, and when I last came into personal contact with them, they had for three years in succession done (as far as they could know) what they had set out to do. Three places of worship had been opened by them and the property paid for, and nearly 200 conversions had been registered. The story of how Heaven was brought into homes where Hell had previously reigned; the record of lives made sweet and happy; the altogether wonderful results of their devoted work astound me, for they are still at it, and are well known and beloved by hundreds of Christian workers, and their work is being superintended by a well-known denomination. The great point is that not one of them is a man of outstanding gifts in the pulpit, and their leader has no gift of public speech at all, yet they all win men and women for the Kingdom.

Group No. 4 consists of four ministers. They are not associated in their work, but I was associated with all four at various times.

The first was the minister of a wealthy, cultured city church, in which anything akin to an evangelistic Mission would have been coldly received. He himself is a degree man and was trained in a well-known college. During the visit of a world-famous evangelist to the city, one of the young women of his church

was urged to go to the front with her sister. The idea was for her to go with her sister for company, but she thought she was being urged to go as an act of confession. Her reply was, "When my own minister invites me to come forward in my own church, I will do so, but not before." This was told to her minister and he decided to give the invitation the very next Sunday after the evening service. He did, with the result that the congregation was electrified to see several of the best known young men and women connected with the church walk to the front and quietly take their places as an outward sign of their inward decision to follow Christ. From then on that minister quietly reaped a splendid harvest, and expressed a sense of shame that he had not attempted it before.

The second in the group was a young minister fresh from college. He was noted for his keen mind and had specialised in philosophy. He had a select country church. A mission was held in the town, and though all the other churches concerned had many of their people converted, he felt that his own people were holding aloof. The conclusion he came to was that they preferred to wait his lead. On the following Sunday, after the sermon in the evening, he left the pulpit and standing in front of the communion table earnestly spoke to them concerning the need of decision and confession of Christ. He admitted that perhaps he had not put this before

them as he should, but said that he unhesitatingly accepted that position, and invited any who would there and then publicly register their decision to follow Christ to step forward and stand with him. More than thirty men and women immediately left their pews and gathered around him, representing some of the most influential families in the town. That night's experience revolutionised his ministry and from that group he afterwards obtained some of his best church workers, and to-day he is known as a minister who wins souls for Christ.

The third in the group was a minister in a strong church. He was an earnest and faithful pastor, thoroughly in sympathy with evangelistic work, but not reaping any visible harvest in his own church. Hearing of other ministers who were having conversions in their churches, he began to invite his people to stay behind for prayer after the evening services. For several Sundays he did this, and each night invited any who would confess Christ to come forward, but there was no response. He became discouraged, and communicating with a friend in the ministry who was known as an evangelist, he urged him to come and help him in the work. His friend consented to come on a certain Sunday evening, but at the same time advised him to continue as he was doing, inviting his own people, praying for them, and expecting them. When the Sunday came for

the visit of the evangelist, he could not fulfil his promise, as he was ill, but he sent word to his friend to try again. For twelve Sundays the invitation had been given, and the minister was sorely tempted not to try again, but he did, and on Monday morning the message which his friend the evangelist received was something like this: "Thank God you need not come; thirty-six of my people confessed Christ last night." The work went on and large numbers were added to that church fellowship.

The fourth in the group was a young minister who had almost scorned the thought of evangelism. He was highly gifted, a wonderful speaker, but with no thought or desire to do evangelistic work. Preaching one night at a church which he was visiting, he was startled afterwards by the approach of a man who brokenly asked him to tell him how he might find forgiveness and light. The young preacher looked at him, and then said quietly, "I cannot tell you, but I will tell you what I will do. I will kneel with you and seek it for myself while you seek it for yourself." Together they knelt and in broken words prayed for each other, and for themselves, and when they rose to their feet each knew that the other had found the greatest light and peace that had ever come into his life. That young minister is to-day the pastor of an influential Congregational church, the Chairman of a Congregational Union, and from the day when he knelt in that vestry he has been

leading men and women into conscious and joyous relationship with Jesus Christ.

R. E. Speer in his excellent book, *The Stuff of Manhood*, says, "The fear of looking like a fool has kept many a man from acting like a hero." This can be applied to the subject before us. The evangelistic gift in some degree is almost universal in those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and it certainly ought to be developed in every preacher's life and ministry. But the fear of failure stares men in the face. Supposing a minister decides to give his people the opportunity of coming to the front, or in some other way signifying their intention of serving Christ and making a public confession of this, his great temptation is to move the responsibility for delivering the invitation on to other shoulders. If he gives the invitation personally, he feels he may get no response, and, to put it candidly, he thinks he may look a fool in the eyes of his congregation. He knows some other minister who does win his people to open confession, therefore he eventually decides to call him in to his help.

If this course of action is persisted in, then certainly that minister will never develop the evangelistic gift, and thus many men miss their greatest opportunity in God's work. Few can ever become famous as great preachers, but to be a soul-winner is a still greater honour, and this is within the reach of almost every faithful proclaimer of the Gospel. Go

back over the instances cited in the four groups mentioned, and practically every class of personality will be found represented.

The first requisite is deep conviction, on the preacher's part, that he is himself a child of God. Then follows the conviction that his hearers may become, and ought to become, the children of God also. If either of these convictions is absent, it is the preacher's duty to set them right. His own personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ ought not to remain in doubt for one moment, and the only place for him to get that settled is on his knees, appropriating by faith the promises of God. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John i. 12, R.V.).

The second conviction will soon follow. "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent" (Acts xvii. 30). Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3). No one familiar with our Lord's teaching will need a multiplicity of texts or quotations. Theoretically all are agreed on this. Then why not act on it without delay?

The main thing is, first of all, to acknowledge responsibility in this matter. As a preacher of the Gospel you are responsible for the spiritual condition

of those committed to your charge, and as certainly as any other responsibility will have to be accounted for, so the day will come when God will require an account from you of what you did to try to win men and women to accept His great salvation. Results you have nothing to do with; they belong to God. God judges no man by results, but He does look at our intention and sincere attempts to carry out His will.

The Mission field would to-day be a wilderness of failure if the first missionaries had not been content to go on, year after year, with no visible results. Their business was to carry out Christ's command, and they did it. In China—to take one instance—the story of the early missionaries is a story of apparently wasted effort. But look at China to-day, and at once it can be seen that the fruit of to-day is the result of the toil and apparent defeat of yesterday.

Leave results with God and be sure of this, that every faithful effort made to extend Christ's Kingdom will bear fruit in God's good time. Many perplexed ministers and disappointed churches would find new life if they were born again into an evangelistic life, and set on fire to seek definitely the winning of men and women to accept Christ as their Saviour and Lord. It will be said that this is what the Church stands for, but in reply it may be said that it is useless sitting by a fire in a rocking-chair,

gently rocking to and fro, singing, "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war." Far better to get on your feet and actually carry out what is being sung, otherwise the song may be taken for sickly sentiment which never issues in action.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERSONAL PREPARATION OF THE EVANGELIST

THERE have been a host of books written on the subject of prayer and the cultivation of the spiritual life, and still the number is being regularly added to, while the field of discovery or instruction seems never to be exhausted. In spite of this, however, there is more need to emphasise the vital necessity of personal preparation than any other thing.

If a preacher really desires to be an effective evangelist, in the highest sense of the term, his first and most important task is his own spiritual preparation. It is pitiful to listen to the criticism of the methods or addresses of successful evangelists, which is often expressed by those who have attended meetings at which numbers of people have professed conversion. More often than not the critics hint that any ordinary preacher could do better as far as a sermon is concerned, and as for the methods used—well, there is nothing in them to explain the results. All such criticism proves that most people look in wrong directions for explanations of spiritual working.

As in other things, so here, human nature rebels against the appointed way, for it exalts God's sovereignty and humbles man's pride. "Many are called, but few are chosen" to do evangelistic work because few choose to do it in God's appointed way. There have been great evangelists whose sermons were examples of majestic preaching, but their number has been few, and offence is felt when men of simple speech and direct methods sway crowds and lead multitudes to claim their place in the Kingdom as children of God.

Supposing a man has education, training, personality, and every other gift which is generally supposed to be necessary for a successful ministry, how is it that failure may yet stare him in the face? It may be because he has neglected the greatest of all requirements for true and lasting success, and that is the preparation of himself.

One of the most subtle temptations a preacher can fall into is to substitute anything—no matter how important—for spiritual power.

Let us put aside pious platitudes and orthodox phraseology. Let us decide not to countenance anything in the way of a statement or theory just because it is the correct thing to say or think, and let us face hard facts in the matter.

The preacher has as his chief duty the bringing of men, women and children into living, re-creating union with God. If he has any object which he puts

before that, then he has no right in the Christian ministry; and the sooner he finds his proper vocation—whether it be on the political platform, or as lecturer, as elocutionist, or at the journalist's desk—the better. If a man is in the Christian ministry, his first and supreme duty is to lead his fellow-creatures to know the Father, and, in knowing Him, to go out and live the life of the children of God. That was the mission of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and it cost Him His life to accomplish it; and His call to us is "Follow Me."

If then the preacher's supreme duty is to lead people into living, loving relationship with God, there must of necessity be a real and living union between himself and God. There can be no possible substitute for this. The experiences through which the world has passed in recent days have demonstrated to everybody that nothing can take the place of real religion. Philosophy, education, organisation are all good in their place, but they are merely doors and windows through which light shines. They are not the light itself. So also a preacher must realise that nothing can take the place of spiritual power. Until a man discovers this, there is a great temptation to seek to produce effects by other means which can only be produced by spiritual force. Among these substitutes, one who has an intimate knowledge of men instinctively thinks of nerve force, eloquence, liturgical forms of service, culture and social qualities.

But nerve force can never take the place of spiritual power, and all attempts to make it do so are disastrous both to preacher and people. A shattered man nervously, with no spiritual resources to draw upon, is of all objects the most miserable and pitiable. Medical science can do little for such a sufferer except to resort to drugs as a temporary method for averting the collapse which must inevitably come. Nerve force is undoubtedly valuable, and God can and does use it for His glory; but it must be linked to His mighty power, renewed and strengthened and filled with His mighty Spirit, otherwise a burnt-out life will result.

Eloquence may draw a crowd and sway a multitude, but by itself it has never built a church pulsating with spiritual power. Remove the eloquent man and your church vanishes. A liturgy is very attractive to some, although the number it pleases is far less than many people imagine, but the most perfect liturgical service in the world is a poor, miserable substitute for spiritual power. In fact, an increase in liturgy often marks a decline in spirituality, the loss of which it vainly tries to make up. Culture is surely admired by all, except those who are deficient in some fine taste. Social qualities are also to be greatly admired; but the man who thinks this can take the place of spiritual power, or is to be more desired, can simply write himself off the list of those likely to move the nation for God.

A great deal has been written in praise of all these, and much time and painful endeavour have been spent in cultivating them; but if a man had everything they represent combined in his personality and church, and had not spiritual power, he would fail—and fail miserably—to achieve the true object for which he ought to be in the Christian ministry.

The preparation of a sermon, when done as it should be done, costs the faithful preacher more than the ordinary hearer ever dreams of. Some men are completely worn out after preparing a sermon; and surely it is not too much to affirm that a sermon which costs little is worth little. But the preparation of the preacher is a still more difficult matter. In fact, the preparation of both the sermon and the self ought to go hand in hand; but if either has to be neglected, let it be the sermon that is put aside while the self is taken in hand.

Robert Murray McCheyne says: "Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this; for your sermons last but an hour or two; your life preaches all the week." Someone else has said: "The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men."

It can be truly said that the sermon is the man. If he is spiritual, full of power, pulsating with life, living in touch with God, transformed by a vision of the glorious Christ, then his sermon will glow and throb with light and power, and the living streams of

the Holy Spirit's power will flow irresistibly through him to the people and to the world.

E. M. Bounds says emphatically : " Preachers are not sermon-makers, but men-makers and saint-makers, and he only is well trained for this business who has made himself a man and a saint."

This is the most serious task to which a preacher can see himself. It means getting daily into tune with the Infinite God through Jesus Christ our Lord, that the Holy Spirit may take complete possession of his life. How the mighty men of God in past generations agonised with God in prayer ! How they waited on Him day and night that they might be cleansed and filled ! It is certainly true that " We must learn to prevail with God for men, before we can prevail with men for God." Spiritual strength comes in this way and only in this way.

Every man will have his own method of approach, but the important thing is that the prayer-life shall be cultivated before anything else. This spells disaster for our conceit and pride, and that is a grand thing. If God's work is to be done effectively, the glory must be His, otherwise the very success and applause and worldly honour which always follow achievement will soon kill the spirituality of the preacher.

There must be candid recognition of our utter dependence on God, and whatever gifts we may have must be laid humbly at His feet, for Him to put

aside or use as He sees fit. Each day must find us determined that no engagement, or rush of work, is allowed to squeeze out our time of secret, sacred intercourse with God. Somehow, somewhere, we must come before Him, and the days on which we feel least inclined to come are the very days on which we must come most. Here we will prayerfully and diligently find our way through God's Word. The New Testament will be our regular book of devotion, and our language is rich in other books which will be found helpful as aids in this holy task.

No man can lay down cast-iron rules for another, for we differ in temperament, and the ideal thing for one becomes a hindrance to another. Some find the best time for their special hour of devotions and spiritual preparation to be first thing in the morning before breakfast. Others discover that it is impossible for them to be in the spirit of prayer until the morning meal is out of the way, and they can lock themselves in their study knowing there is nothing to hinder a time of communion with God.

We should face this matter with as much common sense as we would use in deciding anything else. Let it at once be recognised that there is no special virtue attached to any particular time in the day, unless that time is best suited to bring us quiet and an atmosphere calculated to help us.

There is a real danger of self-righteous pride dictating certain rules or methods. The things

which have kept some men from observing a very early hour for their time of devotion are simply these :—

(a) They have found that instead of helping it hindered their work. By rising early, after exacting work the night before, they were seeking spiritual blessing at the expense of a physical and nervous drain which they could not sustain. They also found that it was impossible to keep their mind alert, and their prayers were becoming mechanical.

(b) The suspicion of self-satisfied complacency about some very good people, and very good books, advocating the early morning hour before breakfast as the time for devotional preparation of the spiritual self. This has set them thinking about it and testing other methods, and they have found that the hour after breakfast brought better results to their spiritual selves than the hour before breakfast, and they were physically and nervously in a better state to do their day's work.

Anything which breeds a pietistic sense of self-satisfaction should be shunned as rigidly as a pietistic phraseology. When your religious observances bring a smug satisfaction, and a sense that you are one of the real saints of the earth, then it is time to alter your methods. When you find that you are thanking God that you are not as other men, then remember that this is not the mind or spirit of Christ.

Many people who desire to seek holiness of life

become troubled because the apparent experience of others is not theirs. They cannot feel as other people seem to feel; they cannot find happiness in using expressions which fall so glibly from the lips of others. Sometimes certain meetings, which seem to arouse others to a sublime height, only serve to cast them down into depression, until they begin to doubt their capacity for holiness.

Let it be said at once that any attempt to force spiritual "feelings" is the pathway to spiritual disaster. Great charity in thinking will follow a commonsense outlook on the life of the world, made up as it is of personalities with varying temperaments and tastes. A Keswick Convention and a Salvation Army meeting differ greatly, and so also is there a very great contrast between the service at St. Paul's Cathedral and a Gospel meeting conducted by the Brethren. But little good can result from one set of worshippers criticising the others who differ so much in outward form and expression. We should rejoice that so many who differ greatly in temperament and taste should have their own way of finding the revelation of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, and thus should know themselves members of the great family of Heaven.

It is not uniformity in outward modes of worship, or expression of ideas and truths, that we need, it is the inward reality of the Spirit-filled life which we all should earnestly seek, so that each in his own way

may cultivate that life and be transformed by it. Therefore even as thousands of people have found the early morning hour the best for their devotions, so thousands again will find it so. But that need not hinder others from finding another hour during the day which will suit them better. The main thing is to have your time each day in which your soul shall come into uninterrupted communion with God.

Christ's life was punctuated by His withdrawal to Olivet for intercourse with His Father. David also evidently had his place of prayer on the same mountain (2 Samuel xv. 32). All the saints whose names have been associated with piety and power were men of prayer, and it can be confidently asserted that a life which is not nurtured in prayer will never permanently move people Godward nor influence the world to abandon its sin.

In that inspiring book, *Purpose in Prayer*, E. M. Bounds says: "It is only when the whole heart is gripped with the passion of prayer that the life-giving fire descends, for none but the earnest man gets access to the ear of God."

A mere saying of set prayers can never take the place of the personal act of the individual coming into God's presence with the confession of his sins, the expression of his needs, the pouring out of his praises, the laying before God the burden of his work, and the pleading for the conversion of those com-

mitted to his charge. Nothing will keep a Christian's life so sweet and guileless as this daily habit, and the absence of it may well arouse within him a sense of danger.

R. E. Speer says : " The evangelisation of the world in this generation depends first of all upon a revival of prayer. Deeper than the need of men : deeper far than the need of money : aye, deep down at the bottom of our Spiritless life is the need for the forgotten secret of prevailing world-wide prayer."

The personal preparation of the evangelist, then, will have in it the cultivation of the prayer-life as one of its chief sources of power. There may be methods which are successful, and messages which move people, but if either or both are used by the prayerless evangelist, he may save other souls, but he is in grave danger of losing his own.

All spiritual work has its grave dangers, and the more wonderful the effects produced, the more dangerous are the temptations to the person through whom they are produced. Because of this fact, the dangerous work is sometimes either denounced or declined, while the cases of evangelists who have made shipwreck of their lives are cited to show the unwholesomeness of evangelism. On the surface this may seem a convincing argument, but the proportion of evangelists who have thus failed will not be found to exceed the proportion of failures amongst

other Christian workers. It does prove, however, that those who give themselves to any kind of work which drains the spiritual, physical and nervous self, must have spiritual resources upon which they can draw, and spiritual sources to which they can go, and do go, which will fortify them for the special conflicts through which they have to pass, and give them the victory over the special dangers which they have to face.

The evangelist, above everyone else, must guard his life with jealous care. He is engaged on most delicate work. He is making almost audacious claims. He is leading a frontal attack on the citadel of sin. He is entrusted with the most arduous position in the line of battle. There are foes against him, and there are enemies within his own camp. It is perhaps true that the eyes of the whole world are upon him, more than on any other Christian worker. Every detail of his life—his salary, his private habits, his domestic relationships, his attitude towards women and girls, his good manners or vulgarities, the hotel he stays at, the books he reads (or does not read)—forms the topic of private or public discussion, and he may rest assured that long after he is dead he will be held up as an example of a real soul-winner or an adventurer.

Perhaps it is well that it should be so, for work so holy should only be attempted by lives which have caught some of the holiness of God. If the evangelist

dwells in the secret place of the Most High, he will know that the evils which surround him will not come nigh him. If he finds that he is tempted to use a God-given spiritual gift to bring him in money, or add to his fame, and if he finds that the praises of men are becoming so sweet that he can hardly live without them, then he may rest assured that he is in graver danger than the souls to whom he is preaching, and he must away to his Olivet for cleansing and power.

The Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A., D.D., in preaching on the "Perils of Power," once said: "Whatever creates in me a sense of power tends to make me atheistic. . . . How is it? It is thus. When I become conscious of the possession of any power I begin to think of myself as a cause rather than as an effect. I find that I can originate enterprises, I can create enthusiasm, I can stir human hearts, I can win public applause, I can move my fellow men. Recognising myself as a power I begin to think of myself as a creator, a cause, and, ignoring all the other causes, I lapse into an atheism which leaves out God. I am a king's ambassador, but I come to regard myself as the king. . . ." Later in the same sermon Dr. Jowett, speaking of the power of eloquence, said concerning the preacher: "He is tempted to forget the glory of his God in the exercise of the power which he holds as a trust. He is tempted to forget that he is only an axe wielded by the Eternal Worker, an axe

whose strength and effectiveness are entirely derived from the Eternal's hand."

Let it be said then, without any cant, that the minister who sets out to win souls must guard his own soul with jealous care. "Knee drill," as the Salvation Army calls it, is soul drill, and soul drill, to be effective and cleansing, must be done more assiduously in private than in public. If a man dare do it, the most humbling exercise is to force himself to write down and consider a list of the temptations of which he is conscious. There are many things peculiar to our several personalities which make us blush when we discover them lurking in our hearts. Write them down; drag them out into the light of God's presence; lay them before the all-seeing eye of our Master, and they will wither up and perish, for He cleanseth us from all sin.

This is serious, soul-testing work, about which it is not easy to write, and it is certainly far harder to practise. But it is serious work for which we are seeking to equip ourselves. There may have been spiritual clowns on the evangelistic platform, as there have been in some pulpits before now, but we must not seek to add to the number. These are days in which God is looking for men who are prepared to go forth, depending only on the power of the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the evangel of the Cross, whether men will hear or whether they will not.

It is much easier to do this work when others have

prepared the ground for you than it is to prepare your own ground and reap your own harvest. To be an effective evangelist in your own church means that you must first become an effective man of prayer in your study. If you feel you are called to do the work of a travelling evangelist, your spiritual difficulties will present themselves in other ways, more subtle, more dangerous, and more deadly perhaps. If here you neglect the hours of personal wrestling with God, you will become an automatic repeater of phrases and sermons which were once burning with real power, but they at last, like yourself, will become empty of all that is of value in the sight of God and man.

The Bible will be our constant companion in our prayer-chamber. The old Book can answer for itself even if the mind is hampered by doubts which have been born through reading speculations concerning its books and authorships. Pages that have brought consolation and inspiration to generations of valiant saints; chapters which have moulded lives and brought thousands to know God in all His purity and love, cannot be dismissed just yet at the dictation of any school of thought or scholarship. If you think they can, then your theory of inspiration is at fault, and you had better settle that on your knees at once.

Whatever you may think of varying theories of inspiration, the fact remains that, for the man whose

soul is tender and aglow with the presence of God, there is a pathway leading to heights of spiritual nurture running right through the Bible. If other men have been lost in the mazes of their own speculations, and have become blinded by the glare from the sand of the desert over which they are travelling, that is no reason why you should not find the wells of water and the palm trees which will nourish and refresh your soul by the way. They are there! Countless thousands have found them, and are still finding them. Look for them sincerely, earnestly, prayerfully, and, if sometimes your heart and head come into conflict, it is safer to trust the inward spiritual leading than it is to stifle that voice by gratifying your desire for mental self-glorification.

If the Bible when prayerfully studied inspires you, then it is itself inspired, and you may safely leave other questions to those who delight in them. Your joy is to find God and to know His will, and to go and proclaim it to those who know Him not. If the putting into practice what is there recorded works out in actual experience—and it does—then we need not wonder that Jesus was so constant in His use of the Scriptures. It was the Scriptures which He opened out to the two travelling to Emmaus; it was the Scriptures which Philip opened out to the eunuch; it was the Scriptures which Paul so constantly dealt with in his addresses, and have not thousands of hearts burned within them at the

unfolding of those same Scriptures since those days?

Many a knotty problem will disappear as you come reverently before God to pray, and to study the Bible, but its pages do not yield their secrets except to the reverent and prayerful. Effective evangelism is impossible for the man who treats his Bible as a field mainly for speculative investigation, and his prayer life principally as something to be psychologically analysed. Let us have all the scholarly research possible in both these fields. Those who love God have nothing to fear, but everything to gain, so long as the investigation is conducted by devout Christian students of undoubted scholarship. But do not mistake every commanding assertion for the result of scholarship. If you must go into these matters, then be sure of your tutors, for on your conclusions will rest your future power—or lack of it, and your future message—or lack of it.

Meanwhile the past experience of the Church of God teaches us that those preachers who were used to turn many to righteousness were men and women who searched the Scriptures and in them found God's revelation to mankind. They were men and women who were urgent in prayer before the Throne of Grace, not now and again, but daily. From that position of reverent prayer and earnest Bible study, they rose up furnished for the great work of winning souls for Christ.

The lives of great and godly men and women provide us, also, with unlimited literature which is calculated to instruct and inspire. Here again every man must find the field which helps him best. Books on the prayer-life are almost without number, while such books as Wesley's *Journals*, or the various lives of great saints and preachers, will inspire and help in a wonderful way. If I may venture a personal word, *The Open Secret*, by Dr. R. F. Horton, read at a serious crisis in my life, proved invaluable and is still my constant companion; while such books as *The Autobiography of Charles G. Finney*, *The Year of Grace* (giving the official account of the Ulster Revival of 1859), the various books on prayer by E. M. Bound, and numbers of others, have helped me more than I can say.

One great thing is to have your regular time for devotion. Let it be a time for Bible study and prayer, having on hand at the same time some helpful devotional book. Let this hour be your first appointment for each day. Never retire to bed at night with any grievance or sin on your soul. Have the blessing of God to begin the day with, and let your last word at night be with Him, that He may cleanse you every whit.

To-day's blessing will not suffice for to-morrow's task, but come again and again to the source of supply, until at last your soul will demand that you shall come and receive your regular supply of strength

and blessing. Be as a little child in these things, and do not be ashamed of being child-like. "As many as received Him to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John i. 12).

Claim your right; act upon it. Constantly remind yourself that you are the child of God, then as His child you will go forth to do His will and be about His work. In this way your personal preparation will lead you into paths of effective evangelism, and the Kingdom will have come closer, because of what the Holy Spirit is doing through you.

CHAPTER V

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EVANGELIST

AFTER personal preparation comes the question of personal equipment. It is of the utmost importance that no man should attempt the work of an evangelist until he has settled the question as to what is the source of his power. That should be his first objective.

It ought not to be necessary to remind those who are preaching the Gospel that such preaching is of little value unless the preacher himself is baptised with the Holy Spirit. But the reminder must be given, or all hope of a successful discussion of evangelism will be gone.

As with the subject of prayer, so the question of the baptism of the Holy Spirit has been dealt with in a profusion of books which approach the subject from various standpoints. No exhaustive discussion will be attempted here, but a plain setting forth of simple truth.

Christ's last promise to His disciples was this :
" But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is

come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth " (Acts i. 8). The second chapter of Acts tells how that promise was fulfilled, but it contains also the tremendous statement : " For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him " (Acts ii. 39).

The glib talking about this holy subject, as with the precious blood of Christ, has unfortunately repelled many healthy-minded people who hate anything approaching cant. But, as with other things, objectionable phraseology must not be allowed to rob the Church, or the individual, of essential truth. There is no more reason for anyone turning from these truths because the actions of some who have professed to believe in them belied their doctrines, than for a man to refuse to go to church because some hypocrites attend there.

Let it be said distinctly, that, without the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the preacher of the Gospel is hopeless when facing the task of leading men and women to God. Special work demands special power, and Christ has promised that power. In that assurance we may confidently approach this subject, and make this objective the first aim of the evangelist.

For this mighty work it is a glorious certainty that we are promised a mighty gift, and failure to

believe this, or to lay hold of this, will mean as tragic a failure as it is possible to imagine. If the preacher has come to God through Jesus Christ, and there laid hold of the gift of Eternal Life, and if in doing this he has made a complete surrender of himself to Christ, to be used as the wisdom of God shall see fit, then he has a right to lay hold by faith of Christ's promise, which is "to all that are afar off."

By faith we must now go forward, and daily lay hold of this gift of God to His children in readiness for every fresh task which faces us. That we shall be overwhelmed with a strange sensation is not promised, but that we shall be the recipients of power is promised, and power never can be realised until its effects are seen. It means power over indwelling sin. It means power over handicapping doubt. It means power to dare and achieve the seemingly impossible. It is not us, but Christ dwelling in us, and on that we may rely with implicit confidence, for He will never leave us nor forsake us.

William Arthur's *Tongue of Fire* should be read prayerfully and carefully, for it has helped many weak servants of Christ to claim their right as the children of God, and to go forth as prophets of the Most High.

The early preachers of the Gospel had neither the organisation nor the scholarship which marks the Church to-day, but they did what thousands to-day

seem powerless to do, they turned an innumerable company of men and women to God. That power was not exclusively theirs; it is ours, and when men to-day dare appropriate it, they too turn many to righteousness. If a Christian worker keeps in touch with God by daily prayer, and if he lays hold by faith of the promises of God, he may confidently go forth to the people with the message of God, knowing that men and women will heed, and turn, and be saved. The work will never become easy. Difficulties will not disappear. Disappointments will certainly still be met with. Disciples filled with the Holy Ghost were imprisoned, they were persecuted, they were killed, but souls were brought from darkness to light and were rescued from the power of Satan, to discover the salvation of God.

The man filled with the Holy Ghost will endure hardship, will take apparent defeats, but still he will go on, for is not his work the work of his Master and Lord? Did they not crucify the Christ? But even as the crucified Christ to-day saves those who come unto Him, so will He use those who are faithful in their work for Him, and no effort for the extension of His Kingdom shall be wasted.

The second objective of the man who wishes to be an effective evangelist will be to learn how to present the truth concerning God and His great salvation in Christ Jesus, that young and old alike shall be

persuaded to accept it. Thus he will be definitely leading his fellow creatures into the life of the children of God, where they will find cleansing and power.

There are those, as we all know, who object to the evangelistic note; they say it is an appeal to the cowardly in man because it is an invitation to people to come and be saved. It may be said at once that if ever personal safety is exalted as the chief or only reason for accepting Christ as Saviour, it is a matter of mistaken emphasis, and no man could be an effective evangelist who made that emphasis in these days. Nevertheless, there is a vital truth in the teaching that the knowledge of personal safety is essential to effective Christian living and acting. Many great old doctrines, which have been discarded by some types of modern preachers, contain a greater amount of truth than their traducers have been able to give us in their place. It is easier to destroy than construct. It is easy to shoot a skylark, but it is not so easy to produce its song.

The truth about personal salvation being essential to Christian living remains, and that truth must be emphasised by all who wish to be effective evangelists. The soul of every individual, in reaching a time of spiritual crisis, faces the supreme question: "What is my attitude towards Christ Jesus?" The effective evangelist is the preacher who wisely leads such a soul to accept definitely the Christ of God as

Saviour and Lord, and that must be his objective. Immediately such an acceptance is made, the Christian life begins. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal Life: but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life" (John iii. 36).

A person living by the sea coast is not taunted with being a coward because he learns to swim. By learning he ensures his own safety, but he also qualifies to save others who may need his help to escape from a watery grave. If a man unable to swim was drowning he could not hope to help his brother who was in a similar predicament; in fact, if he attempted it, his clutching hands would hasten the death of both of them. To save life, a man must first of all secure his own safety by learning to swim, because the safer he is in the water, the surer it is that he will save others who otherwise would perish.

"Safety first" is placarded prominently all over Britain. Are they cowards who heed this warning? Are they narrow-minded bigots who issue such a warning? The driver of a public conveyance is not allowed upon our roads until he is competent, but the fact that he has learned to secure his own safety makes it possible for him to serve the community and preserve others who wish to travel in safety.

Personal salvation comes naturally from a right attitude towards God through Jesus Christ. "God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life. These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God " (1 John v. 11-13). From these and many other New Testament references it seems that it is a most important thing that there should be a clear knowledge in a man's heart that he has eternal life, in fact it is an essential experience. Without it the eternal warfare is still being waged within the human soul, between the higher and the lower, and in that condition no one is fit to guide another.

Paul went to his audiences with a definite experience and a certain hope. Peter standing up before his hearers knew from his own transformation that Christ lived and saved. Philip preaching in Samaria or to the eunuch was able to speak of those things which he knew. It has always been the same with those who have brought conviction to their hearers: they have themselves first been convicted and converted. They have been saved by Grace before they could tell others how they too might find so great salvation.

If we are going to be effective in our evangelism, we must lead those who hear us into a living experience for themselves, that they may be able to reach out eager hands to perishing men and women and

lead them into the way which their own feet have found to be secure beneath them. The positive note therefore must vibrate through all that we say, for we know that what God has done for us He can and will do for those who listen to us, and if they fail to heed and turn unto Him, they are missing the mark, and their lives will be tragic failures. Coming from the presence of God to the presence of the people the preacher will radiate to them the gracious influence he himself has been experiencing, and they will detect and recognise, although they may not be able to define, the unction of the Holy Spirit.

Eloquence and polish please the minds of people, but it is the mystical presence of the Holy Spirit in a preacher's own heart which touches other hearts and brings souls to the Mercy Seat for pardon and power. This must be the deliberately chosen objective of the evangelist, or he will preach without that power for which people are literally hungering. This he must seek for as he has never sought for anything before, or souls which might have been won will go from his church to wander aimlessly through life, knowing they have missed the Christ and yet not knowing how they have missed Him.

A minister may successfully superintend the working of his church, keep its coffers filled with money, beautify its premises, add to its prestige, gain for himself a distinguished place in his denomination,

but, if he has not led men and women to Christ, he will go into the presence of the King with empty hands. He will know that he has missed his high calling, and that through him others also have failed to find the way which God intended for them.

Do not heed those who shake their heads and tell of the backsliders after an evangelistic preacher has reaped a harvest. It is said that General Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, once had a visit from a wealthy man who handed him a substantial cheque for his work. He gave it to him on condition that not a penny of it was to be used for his evangelistic work. The old General was quite willing to have the money, but he was not willing to let this implied criticism go unchallenged, so he asked his visitor why he did not wish any of the money to be used for that particular work.

"I do not believe in it," was the prompt and decided answer.

"But on what grounds do you not believe in it?" asked the General.

"It is not satisfactory work," was the reply. "Look at all the backsliders you have."

The General's eyes sparkled as he ventured a question: "Do you know the difference between a house kept by two old maids and a great hotel?"

The rich man looked puzzled and could not quite

see what that had to do with the question before them.

“Well, I shall tell you,” said General Booth. “In the house of the old maids they know how many spoons they have, how many cups, how many saucers, and how many plates. Everything is in its place and everything is very precise. One day Mary Ann, washing the tea things in the kitchen, suddenly lets a cup slip through her soapy fingers, and it smashes on the floor. Poor Mary Ann! Miss Lavinia and Miss Isabella come into the kitchen and hold up their hands in horror. A cup broken! Dear, dear, dear! Preposterous! Awful! And there stands Mary Ann with the corner of her apron in one eye, looking with the other at the wreckage on the floor, while she listens to the stern tones of Miss Lavinia and Miss Isabella saying that if ever she is such a wicked, careless girl again she must certainly seek another situation, as she most decidedly shall not stay there.” The old General looked at his visitor, the latter evidently greatly perplexed as to what this parable might mean, when the wise old man leaned across the table and added: “In a great hotel they break things every day, but look at the business they do!” The shot went home, and a laughing consent was cordially given that the money should be used at the General’s discretion.

It may be safely said that those who criticise evangelistic work most severely, because after every harvest some of the results are disappointing or prove valueless, generally have few if any converts to lose. They look upon a church as ideal which resembles the first establishment used by General Booth to illustrate his point.

Christ's parable of the sower teaches us amongst other things that, although only a proportion of the seed sown brought forth a harvest, it was worth the husbandman's while to sow it. The history of the Church proves this also, for, if it had not been for revivals and the work of evangelistic churches, Christianity would have died out long ago. This proves that evangelism is God's method, and harvests must be reaped if the barns are to be kept full.

In spite of all criticism or opposition, learn to present the truth in such a way that it will find acceptance in the hearts of those who hear. As someone once said, "Many men have the goods, and there are plenty of people eager to buy, but the owners do not know how to sell." There is abundance of wood on the altars, but there is no fire under it, and so it stays there and never becomes transformed into the acceptable sacrificial flame.

Let the preacher pray for a passion to win the souls of men, and keep before him the clear objective of

turning many to righteousness. Let him make every sermon in the light of this objective and then preach as if everything depended on him. Having done that, he can be sure that God will do His part, and miracles of grace are bound to be seen.

Congregations are composed of all kinds of people, and though the minister may think he knows them, he does not ! There are hidden things in the hearts of many and temptations and sins which he never dreams of. His judgment of them is based on external appearances ; they know themselves as they really are, and many such need a burning word of exhortation as much as yonder man who is known to be black with sin.

It is wonderful how the setting forth by the preacher of the simplest and most elementary truths of religion, revealing the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, often is a means of inspiration and blessing to older Christians. There is a charm and beauty about the story of God's Divine provision for the salvation of men which never loses its power, and when that story ceases to be told from any pulpit, Christians themselves feel starved and disappointed. When it is told, Christians are helped, and the unconverted are led to understand, and find life.

The preacher, having come to the source of power that he may be fitted for his work, having steadily applied himself to personal preparation and sought

the best equipment possible for service, should throw himself into that service with a transparent sincerity and fearless audacity, expecting blessings to follow, and they will follow. No church with such a ministry can ever fail to accomplish the work for which it was originally intended, and no minister throwing himself into such a work can ever fail to realise that he is engaged in the holiest of all callings.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERSONAL CONTACTS OF THE EVANGELIST

WHEN a man has chosen his objective in life, the whole of his life must be concentrated on that objective, if he is to accomplish it. Thousands pass through life having done little, yet their ideals may have been beautiful and their dreams radiant with hope. The nature which is good at planning is not always good at fulfilling. If all the schemes of committees had been put into operation, the different institutions concerned would be busy enough and perhaps would have accomplished more than at present is the case. There is a positive danger in the multiplicity of committees and schemes; there may be much fuss and little achievement. It is not always the hen which cackles the loudest and the longest which lays the most eggs; only a trap-nest can reveal which bird in the yard produces the most and pays the best. There is a very pithy saying which it is well to embody in everyday life, and it is this: "Do it to-day, for to-morrow to-day will be yesterday."

If then you have chosen as your objective to seek to be an effective evangelist, and if that really means the definite winning of men, women and children to be consistent and persistent followers of Jesus Christ, the first step to take, after the cultivation of the habit of personal preparation and the clear outlining of your objectives, is to get right at the work in real earnest.

You would not go net-fishing with a rod, and you would not try to catch sharks with a fly. If you were on an American prairie you would perhaps learn to rope cattle with a lasso, but if you tried to use a lasso in the Queensland scrub you would waste your time and energy, for while you were disentangling your useless rope from the branches of the trees the experienced Australian bushman would have thrown and secured his beast with ease and skill. Learning to drive a motor-car in London does not mean that you can drive a pair of half-broken horses down a mountain track with safety. You may know how to tap out words on a typewriter, but you may only bring discord out of a piano.

A master once asked a class in an Australian school how they would proceed if they wished to break in a wild horse. Various answers were given until a lad from the country had his turn, and his reply was given with a languid drawl: "You would want first to catch your horse." City boys could

theorise, but the country boy knew the initial difficulty, for he had had experience.

The minister who thinks that there are certain catchy ways, or hidden rules, which when learned will make a man an evangelist, is heading for utter and heart-breaking failure in taking up the greatest and noblest work in the world. Books may be written on how to be an evangelist, but, although they may help by revealing the experience of others, they cannot take the place of experience itself.

Every man who wishes to win men for Christ must first know the men he hopes to win, and there is no way of knowing men but by coming into contact with them. Half the theories which are propounded in conferences and other religious gatherings regarding what "the man in the street" is saying and thinking are ridiculous in their absurdity. The reason is, that many of those who are asked to read papers, or deliver addresses on these subjects, know absolutely nothing of "the man in the street." Their street is often a study lined with books, or the road which leads from that study to their pulpit. The only street they have known is the one they trod from home to school, and from school to college, and then from college to church.

The abstract thinking of scholars is not of necessity the everyday thinking of practical men who toil hard for their living and face pinching poverty most

of their lives. It can be decisively stated that half the skittles of doubt and difficulty which some men knock over in eloquent speeches before admiring audiences of people of like education and experience have no real existence outside theoretical essayists' imaginations. Doubts which certain lines of study generate in the student's mind do not of necessity exist in the minds of those who have not passed through that particular branch of study. Problems which arise in consequence of stages of development in education or reading are problems which find their origin in that particular line of thought, but they do not flourish elsewhere.

It is right to shoot into the air to kill a flying bird, but when you want to shoot a hare you keep your line of fire low and take into account the pace at which he is running. It is not what you think an ordinary man ought to think that you have to deal with, it is what he does think. If you throw undigested chunks of philosophy at an audience, it may sound wonderful to some, and perhaps overwhelm with admiration others who have not the slightest idea of what you are talking about; but, for the purpose of bringing men and women to know the love of God, it is about as useful as if you shot into the air to kill something on the earth.

The day has come when the work of the ministry must be subjected to severely practical tests. If

the world is not being changed by it, if the hearers are not being brought to know God better, then it is failing, and the sooner we find out the cause of the failure and alter things the better. A sermon may be a polished literary effort, but if it does not bring men to God it is as useless as a penny squib on a battlefield. Every sermon should be tested by the results it produces, for preaching which produces nothing is worth nothing.

One of the greatest hindrances to becoming an effective evangelist is that of being lop-sided. All professions and callings are apt to produce lop-sided people, but with none is it so fatal to effectiveness as with the preacher.

A gardener may become absorbed in his work, and desiring to excel, he naturally concentrates on books about gardening, while he finds his greatest delight in the company of other gardeners, comparing notes and experiences. This undoubtedly may help him to grow magnificent carrots, but it does not of necessity make him a grower of character. Take him out of his garden and show him a cathedral, and probably he is lost. Architecture may not appeal to him, and if it does, he may know nothing about it. Put him in the company of other men than gardeners and, unless the conversation turns to flowers, fruit or vegetables, he may be the dullest of companions.

How often we can pick out the schoolmaster or

schoolmistress, the musician or the preacher, in the same way. They are proficient in talking "shop," but away from the association of their lives they are lost and may repel people of other callings.

This defect in developing a well-balanced life may be counterbalanced by a proficiency in cultivating a garden better than anyone else, or in teaching children with wonderful results, or in bringing music out of an instrument in such a way that thousands will be charmed. But with the preacher a lop-sided life is fatal to influence and effectiveness. It is the one calling which demands breadth of vision, variety of experience, wideness of knowledge, and a catholicity of sympathy, otherwise the very object which ought to dominate the preacher's life is never attained. He of all others must reveal the oneness of life. For him there must be no particular social set: he must be at home in any society, and make everyone else in the group in which he finds himself feel perfectly at home with him. He will certainly be tempted to seek as his companions those who by reading, breeding and education give him most pleasure; but he has no right to be distinguished as one of them, to the exclusion of the others to whom he should minister.

What would we have thought of our Lord if He had eaten only at the table of the rulers, or preached only to the educated, or sat by the well-side only

with the cultivated? One of the greatest things recorded concerning His ministry was "The common people heard Him gladly." And again, "Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him." A most striking fact was that, whether at the Pharisee's table, or in the publican's house, or sitting with a group of fishermen, or talking to a wayward woman, or speaking to a thief on the cross He was the same Jesus. The very children clambered on to His knee; while the common people came to Him with their troubles as readily as the centurion.

Let a preacher be suspected of caring for the rich more than for the poor, let him be thought to spend more time ministering to the needs of the socially powerful than he does to sympathising with and helping the struggling and needy, and his power to grip and save the outsider—aye, and many an insider, too—has gone for ever, and rightly so. There are no adjectives for the Christian preacher, neither working-man nor gentle-man.

When a man feels the call of God to such an extent that he dares to take the high and holy office of a preacher of the Gospel, he for ever cuts himself adrift from any distinctive social position; either that, or he is false to his Lord and his Divine ordination. He has given himself to the sacred duty of service for the universal brotherhood of humanity.

He is not the advocate of a certain class, but he is the one to whom all classes must listen because he is faithfully seeking to bring to them the mind and will of God as revealed in Christ Jesus.

He cannot hope to do this unless he is a diligent cultivator of personal contact with all classes of people. No doubt he will have in his private life those friends to whom he delights to go for relief, for recreation of body, mind and soul, and in whose companionship he will find refreshment. But such visits must not be the dominant habit of his life, any more than his visits to the golf links or the tennis courts are. A minister known chiefly as a golf or tennis player is looked upon with open contempt by most people, but no healthy-minded person would deny the right—nay, the duty—of healthy recreation for the hard-worked preacher. But all such times must be as brooks by the way, refreshing the life of the traveller that he may pass on to better achievements, not claiming that the majority of his hours should be spent idling on their banks.

Think of the power wielded by Abraham Lincoln over the great mass of his nation. He spoke their language, he knew their feelings, he lived in their experiences, and he led them, as no other man could have done, at the greatest crisis in the history of the United States of America. It is recorded by Dr. Elijah P. Brown, in his pithy book, *Point and*

Purpose in Preaching, that once he was asked how he had obtained such a command of language, and his reply was : " If I have got any power that way, I will tell you how I suppose I came by it. You see, when I was a boy all the local politicians used to come to our cabin to discuss politics with my father. I used to sit by and listen to them, but my father would not let me ask many questions, and there were a good many things I did not understand. Well, I would go up to my room in the attic and sit down, or pace back and forth till I made out just what they meant. And then I would lie awake for hours, just a-putting their ideas into words that the boys around our way could understand." Dr. Brown adds these words : " The preacher who is not always in school, trying to learn something from everything and from everybody, will soon be dried up and stored away with the other mummies. The man who graduates and stops there will soon be able to take his collar off over his head."

Every preacher who desires to be an evangelist ought to lay hold of the great truth contained in those words, for they reveal the secret which comes alone from personal contact with the actual life of the people to whom he ministers. No human interest is too insignificant for him to know something of by actual contact, and the greater the interest the preacher has in the pulsating life of the community

about him, the greater must be his grip of the people surrounding him. Dr. Charles E. Jefferson says : " It is in the suds of everyday speech that the starch of the schools must be washed out of the preacher's style."

It is far harder to put great truths in simple language than to use the phraseology to which you have become accustomed in college and in the study. But intelligent contacts with actual life will serve to prove to you that you might as well use a foreign language to the ordinary man in the pew as use the technical phrases of a text-book. This is not a reflection on his education, but it is a revelation of the want of common sense on the part of some who occupy pulpits.

The dreary part of being shown over a great factory or engineering works is, that the guide does not understand the art of explaining things without using the technical expressions which every man in the establishment understands readily enough, but which are quite outside the ken of the visitors. Most of his life has been spent in the workshop, and though he is acting as a guide for once, he has not been trained as a guide. His mode of description is his mode of daily thinking and is the result of his training, entirely suitable to his daily occupation, but entirely unsuitable to his unaccustomed task.

On the other hand, with the preacher who is

seeking to win souls it is just the opposite. His principal work is to act as a guide in spiritual matters, so in all his contacts with people and books his chief aim should be to learn how to be a guide and still a better guide. It is fatal to effectiveness when a man takes the occupation of a guide to souls in order to earn his living, while he devotes the chief part of his life to the indulgence of his taste for study. Such a state of things may be easily drifted into without realising it, but, to put it plainly, it is dishonest.

Personal contact with persons or books must yield results in experience and efficiency, or it represents so much wasted time. A thousand effective evangelists could find a thousand pulpits eager to invite them to-morrow, for there is no branch of the Christian ministry so short of men as this. But to qualify for one of these pulpits requires severe concentration on the noble object in hand.

Christ's speech was of the simplest, yet He unfolded the mightiest themes. But His school of human experiences was the workshop, to which no doubt the rustic as well as the educated resorted to hear His conversation. But He heard theirs also. He knew Nature by actual contact with mountain and stream, and when He spoke of the sower or the salt, the birds or the lilies, He was speaking of something which He knew would be readily understood. So He used the seen and simple to illustrate the

unseen and complex, and in doing so unfolded to ordinary individuals their extraordinary individuality.

He knew God as His Father by His daily intercourse with Him, and He knew His love by actual experience, and so "He taught as one having authority, and not as the Scribes."

There can be no greater matter urged upon those who desire to be effective in the field of evangelism than to cultivate personal contacts with minds open and ready to absorb and translate the commonplace into the common speech and thought of the ordinary individual, so that the hearers may be taught of eternal truths and realities.

It is easier to criticise severely some evangelists because of their unconventional speech and mannerisms than it is to learn their skill at reaching the heart of vast audiences through the medium of understandable methods of teaching. If they have objectionable ways, avoid those ways, but learn this lesson, that people will more readily forgive lack of good taste than they will lack of common sense provided that the lack of good taste is atoned for by real downright earnest consecration.

The secret of such men as Sam Jones, Billy Sunday, Peter Cartwright, and others of their class who have shocked thousands, and yet have been used to convert tens of thousands, is worth learning. Peter

Cartwright spoke to backwoodsmen, and his methods horrified cultured people. Billy Sunday speaks to those who are familiar with the slang of the baseball field, and he shocks those to whom his language is an unintelligible jargon. Nevertheless in their spheres they have done work which has transfigured lives, and wrapped up in their addresses are truths which any preacher might do well to emphasise with a similar intensity. It is not their eccentricities we need bother about learning, for they would but make us into clowns; it is their passion and their effectiveness, for if we learn these, then we shall become prophets to our own generation.

The people to whom we minister are hungry for the note of authority and the distinctive marks of experience in our teaching. These are to be desired above all the crude signs of the workshop, which too often mar the work of those who seek to guide souls into the light of the glory of God. The danger is that preachers for ever spoil their effectiveness as evangelists by thinking of sermons as the end of their work, instead of realising that they are to be the means to the ultimate end of all their labours, viz. the bringing of souls into the liberty of the children of God.

Whatever is done, then, let it be done with the object of bringing the salvation of Christ clearly and forcibly to the people in such a way that they

cannot possibly fail to understand. They must be made to understand also that it is a matter of life and death.

Personal contact with life is made through books to a degree of which even scholars are not always aware. There is no value in a book merely because it is a book, but when it is realised that a book gives personal contact with another mind, and through that book the experiences, thoughts and ideas of other people are brought to us, then the greatest enrichment of the reader and student takes place. Here we can get in a comparatively short time the teaching of the best minds in the world. We can go back centuries and live over again the experiences of past generations. We can call the dead back to life and come into actual touch with them, living their life and passing through their experiences. No amount of travel or personal contact with living people, by itself, can give us all that reading and study bring to us, for we can have delivered to our very doors in a small parcel the minds, ideals and experiences of men and women of all generations.

But there is a danger here, too, of becoming lopsided. Preachers are apt to find themselves sorted out into schools of thought, and they may do their reading only on certain lines which bring them pleasure and satisfaction. They learn to speak the language of their own particular school; they even

dress as that school dresses; then comes the limp in their gait when they are absolutely satisfied that all other schools are quite wrong, while theirs is quite right. They refuse to read what other schools write, and yet sometimes, with prompt and dogmatic utterances, they will wave aside any argument which may be propounded if based on some teaching with which they are not familiar, except perhaps in a secondhand way. This is fatal to influence or effectiveness along right lines, and it is calculated to breed intolerance and prejudice, both of which are children of ignorance. The preacher would do well to bear in mind from the outset that infallibility is not to be found in any one school of thought or scholarship, but great truths lurk where they are least expected, and valuable experiences are to be gained from teachers with whom we may seriously disagree in many things. Then, again, how am I to discuss with intelligence any writer if I have not come into personal contact with his writings? If my knowledge is secondhand, then my ideas are not my own at all, but the ideas which have come to me through someone else, warped by prejudice, perhaps, or even distorted by wilful misrepresentation.

The personal contacts of the preacher must be on a generous scale, therefore, whether it be personal contact with people and their varied interests, or with books. Thus many valuable lessons will be

learned, not only of how to do things, but of how not to do them, and the wise preacher will ever be open to learn, to adapt himself and to grow. To stand still and persist in using methods or phraseology long since valueless or out of date is to court abject failure.

Let the preacher, therefore, avoid lop-sidedness as he would avoid any other failing. He is out to reach the people and bring them home to the heart of God, and to do this he must cultivate those qualities which will help him to get into personal contact with men and women of all classes, and win their confidence and respect. He must know what they are feeling and what they are thinking, and he must talk to them in such a way that his message can be readily understood, and then, by the grace of God, he will be able to achieve the mighty purpose for which he has become a preacher of the Gospel.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROFESSIONAL EVANGELIST

THE most serious criticisms of the work of evangelists are called forth by the methods employed so often by what are termed "professional evangelists." That some of these criticisms are correct when applied to some evangelists no one can deny. It is not the purpose of this book to criticise, but if possible to construct; therefore we must give close and earnest consideration to the methods whereby we mean to do our evangelistic work.

Scores of young men set before them as their greatest ambition the ideal of becoming travelling evangelists. The office appeals to them as the one in which the mightiest work can be done for the cause of Christ. In this they are making a grave and tremendous mistake. It is an undisputed fact that there have been great men of God whose lives were given up to travelling about the world conducting special evangelistic services, and we can all thank God for them. At the same time it must be affirmed with the utmost candour that, except

in very rare instances, travelling evangelists should not be necessary.

Our human personality is a complex thing, and few of us will ever understand all the workings and motives of its hidden depths, therefore it behoves us very carefully and prayerfully to analyse our inclinations, lest we are not really seeking God's way but our own.

It may sound harsh to say it, but it must be said as kindly yet as firmly as possible, that many young men, when first they hear the call of God to go out into His work, while quite willing to respond, are simultaneously influenced by another voice bidding them take the easiest and quickest way into that work. In their youthful ardour the thought of the world lying in the grip of the wicked one fires their brain and heart with a yearning to get to the work at once. How can they do it? They approach their minister, and when the years of preparation work which are necessary are unfolded to them they are often dismayed and discouraged. At this stage there are always earnest but ignorant people who will feed their inclination to rebel against anything like training and education. Perhaps they go to a big Mission, and seeing the work in full swing, and feeling the enthusiasm of the whole surroundings, and counting the numbers going into the inquiry rooms, they think that this is the one

or chief way of bringing in the Kingdom. Perhaps the missionary is not a man of education, or they remember that a number of such men have done great work with little in the way of education, and instantly, without pausing to think that possibly it may be their own conceit, or pride of heart, or disinclination to submit to necessary discipline which is swaying them, they decide that they will become evangelists.

Unfortunately so many men go into the work of the regular ministry without any knowledge of how to lead men and women to decision, that it has become a necessity for churches to employ traveling evangelists, otherwise harvests would be lost. Therefore young men, knowing that some men have become evangelists without long years of training, see in this an opportunity for them to step right into a place of prominence and power, without the mental and spiritual testing entailed by going through a prescribed course of study. They do not realise—it is impossible that they should—that their motives are not pure, for they are sincere enough in following the emotions which fill their hearts, and easily imagine that these are the very noblest impulses which can find a place in the human breast. They are not to blame, they have not had the experience or knowledge which could reveal to them the perils of the pathway

along which they desire to travel. All they see is a multitude to preach to and converts to be secured. All they feel is the urgency of the call, and the apparent ease with which that call could be responded to. They are sincere enough, God knows, but many disastrous decisions can be made when lack of experience and utter ignorance of the dangers involved in the pathway in front of them impel them to a course from which men of sane judgment would deter them.

The man who sets out to be a travelling evangelist, and who begins that work with no training whatever, who has behind him no education worth speaking about, who has no point of contact with the minds of great men through reading, who has no deep and ripe spiritual experience, is embarking on a course which is likely to bring disaster to himself and to the cause which he may be sincerely endeavouring to forward. There have been, and no doubt there will be, wonderful exceptions to this rule, but the growing suspicion of, and antagonism to, the ordinary itinerating evangelist, which is being increasingly expressed all through the English-speaking world to-day, shows that many churches and many ministers have through bitter experience found their work disappointing. The temptations which face such an evangelist are terrible, and the gravest danger of these temptations

lies in their subtlety. The marvel is that so many of them have been humble men of God, steeped in prayer and delightful in their transparent sincerity. It is certain that the Church will need men for this office for a long time to come, and it is certain that they have done an immense amount of good, but it is also certain that there is a better method of gathering the harvest of our churches if we have but the wisdom to discover it.

The sooner we admit, with a candour from which all possibility of mere carping criticism has been removed, that the office of the travelling evangelist is by no means the highest in the Christian Church, the better it will be for all concerned. Spectacular results and a highly emotional atmosphere are not conducive to a commonsense estimate of values.

An evangelist, after a very successful Mission in a flourishing town in a wheat-growing district in one of the Dominions, was approached by a lady with this question: "Why is it that you in ten days have been able to do more than all the ministers and clergymen in this town have done in ten years?" The evangelist immediately replied that it was completely wrong to think that he had done anything of the kind. The lady, however, insisted that it was so. Was it not a fact that in ten days several hundred people had made public confession of

Christ? Yet in all the churches no such number had been converted in the past ten years.

The evangelist pointed out to his questioner the miles of golden wheat-fields which stretched away as far as the eye could see. It was a wonderful sight, for the grain was nearly ready for the harvest, and as the wind blew across the open stretch of country it looked like a mighty sea with its waves following one another in endless regularity.

"In a few weeks," he said, "the machines will be at work in those fields, and all will be bustle and activity as the harvest is gathered. It is quiet enough to-day, and has been for some months past, but when the harvest begins the air will be filled with the buzzing of the machinery and the shouting of men. What will you think, after that harvest is gathered, if one of the workmen boasts that he has done more work than all the farmers? He has only been in the district a short time, yet he has taken from those fields one thousand bags of wheat, while the farmer who has lived there for years only stood by and helped. If that harvester says anything like that to you, your reply will be to remind him that once those fields were forests. Men and women came and toiled, suffered and slaved, until at last they cleared the land and fenced it in. Then they ploughed it, and in other ways prepared it, and finally sowed it. Then God

watered it with His rain and warmed it with His sun. Without all this work in past days there could be no harvest to-day. You would say to him: 'Who is the harvester? Simply a man equipped with a certain machine which gathers the results of other men's work.' The farmer may be his own harvester, and often is, but sometimes he calls in a neighbour, or a specialist, to do that part of the work for him, because their machinery is better fitted for the task. What applies to those harvest fields," continued the evangelist, "applies to the work of God. In this town there have been godly parents, painstaking Sunday School teachers, and devoted ministers of the Gospel. They have toiled unceasingly during the past years, preparing the soil, and sowing the seed, while their prayers have ascended day and night to God, who has been watering the spiritual fields with the dews of His grace. What you have been seeing during the past ten days has been the ingathering, and that harvest was the result of past labour. I as the evangelist have not produced that harvest, but as a co-worker with my brethren in the ministry have come in to participate in the joy of the Harvest Home, and, as one with experience in the harvest field, have just taken the leading part in this particular piece of work. It was not the greatest work, although it might be more spectacular than the work

previously done by many unseen and unpraised workers, but God will know to whom the greatest praise is due."

That lady, with her mistaken estimation of values, went away admitting that she had never quite looked at things in that light before, and perhaps she now realises that there could be no ingathering but for the patient, consistent and persistent work done by those who, year after year, toil on through drought and heat, summer and winter, preparing the way of the Lord.

At the same time it is necessary to press the point that there must be evangelists to help gather the harvest. If men have not been specially trained to do this work in their ministry, then it must be done by someone, or the whole work of God suffers. It is this sense of necessity which leads most churches and communities which employ the travelling evangelist to follow that course, and yet it is this class which has done most to bring evangelistic work into disfavour.

The prominence given to the visitor in preliminary advertisements and Press reports is the outcome of the desire to interest the whole place which is to be evangelised, so as to secure large gatherings at the meetings. But the effect on the evangelist himself may be bad. We can thank God that so many of them have been splendid men of excellent

character, but the fact that many of them have had no experience whatever of the problems of the settled pastorate makes it impossible for them to enter fully into the difficulties and demands of that noblest of all callings. There have been bitter experiences, too, of dictatorial manners, or of rudeness to those giving them hospitality, or of financial accompaniments connected with the Missions they have conducted which have made some churches shy of again engaging anyone following this calling.

These statements are made after considerable experience of special Missions and conferences in which ministers of all shades of belief have openly and freely expressed their opinions.

It would strengthen the Church if recognised men were set aside by every denomination for this work. They would then be on the same footing regarding training, discipline and official recognition as every other minister, and a central authority would have the responsibility for all arrangements connected with their activities.

The necessity of the Church has made the opportunity for the unattached evangelist. It is useless hurling bitter criticism at this man or that. Generally those who have the most right to say many things say nothing. A sense of delicacy keeps them quiet; a fear of hindering the work of God influences them to remain silent. The result is that the old evils

are repeated, and a noble office is sometimes brought into disrepute, and evangelism is discredited.

Personally I have worked with a number of professional evangelists with great delight and considerable blessing to myself, nevertheless it is certain that the time has come when our denominations must see that accredited men are set aside for this office. Until that time arrives, the very best thing for every minister to do is to throw himself into the work when a travelling evangelist has been engaged for a Mission in his town. The policy of antagonism, or the attitude of criticism, only causes more harm than the Mission could ever do.

Even if the visitor's theology is wrong, or his methods unacceptable to some, the fact remains that the presence and co-operation of men of other shades of opinion will help to restrain what might otherwise become exaggerated. In God's work it is not the points on which we differ which ought to be accentuated, but the points on which we can agree. Surely, then, if an evangelist is endeavouring to win men and women to decision for Christ, every minister ought to be present to assist in that work. In spite of everything there are bound to be some brought into the inquiry rooms, and who is to say that the good Spirit of God may not have chosen this opportunity to win them? If so, who are we that we fight against God? These converts will

afterwards be committed to the ministers' care, and, even though they may not agree with the missionary, they must receive these men and women who have been moved to make a public declaration, and watch over them tenderly, otherwise it is certain that God will require an account of their lives from them.

This standpoint needs enforcing clearly. Better for a man or woman to be brought to God in submission and surrender through a shallow and narrow emotionalism than to be driven away from realising the love of Christ through a glib pretence at a culture which destroys, but fails to construct.

Even as there is a lot of humbug in the statement of folk outside the Church that they do not come to church because of the hypocrites inside the Church, so there is a lot of humbug in a good deal of the patronising statements of men who refuse to enter into the work of evangelism because of the class of teaching given, and the doctrines held, by those who help in evangelistic meetings.

The very self-evident answer to the criticism about hypocrites inside the Church is that every man, who knows he is not a hypocrite, ought to be there to counteract the influence of the hypocrites who are there, and so save such a noble institution from those who are in possession of it. The same thing undoubtedly applies to evangelism.

If it is right to win souls for God, then every man of God ought to be there helping in the work, and keeping the methods by which the work is done on a high plane, and counteracting the evil influences of the undesirable people whom they affirm are at present doing that work. But the truth is, most of the statements, both about evangelists and those interested in evangelism, are pure exaggeration. They are often made on hearsay, and many of those making them have never been intimately connected with evangelistic work in any shape or form. If it had not been for the remnant of devoted souls who have kept the flag of evangelism flying, the Church of God would to-day be in a sorry plight, and the sooner we cease destructive criticism of work going forward, and start on constructive policies, which are likely to help the Church of God in her spiritual work of aggressive missionary enterprise, the sooner will God's rich blessing rest upon her and Christ's Kingdom come.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MINISTER HIS OWN EVANGELIST

It can be said without any hesitation that the most valuable evangelists in the world are ministers who are doing their own evangelistic work in their own churches.

Evangelistic work must be done, or the Church will degenerate and die. The number of those who agree with this position has greatly increased during the last few years, but the danger which we have to face just now is that in swinging back to evangelism we may, in our anxiety to make up for lost time, employ methods which will disappoint us and eventually hurt the work that we are so anxious to do.

The work of evangelism, done by men in the regular ministry in their own churches, is the ideal to aim at. It is the greatest aid to the personal religious life of the minister, for he soon finds that he must be in close touch with God or evangelism becomes impossible. It is also invaluable for deepening the spiritual life of the church, for in an evangelistic church there is no room for cold

exclusiveness or rigid class distinctions. The regular influx of new life into the membership tends to create a genial warmth in the fellowship of the church, and brings into play those better qualities in the older members which means a great deal in the way of spiritual development for the younger Christians. Then again the souls which are born in the atmosphere of the church are more likely to go on in a natural growth than those which have been born in the heated and unusual atmosphere of a great Mission in a hall, or in some place other than the church.

If the methods adopted by the minister in his own church, during his ordinary work, influence those to whom he is preaching regularly to make their great decision, the work of instruction follows naturally in the same environment, and the percentage of loss is so small that it is not worth considering. This can never be said of the results coming from a Mission held outside the church.

The reasons are not far to seek. When a united Mission is arranged, although it may be held under ideal conditions, and may result in great good being done, still there are always those who will not enter into the spirit of the work going forward. In some cases ministers stand aloof. They either do not attend the meetings at all, or attend so few that they never get into the spirit of the movement. Maybe they

have not attended at all in an attitude of cordial approval, and so have been antagonistic to the work to a degree which they themselves do not realise. When the names of professed converts are sent to them, it sometimes happens that through this expressed, or unexpressed, prejudice the minister is not in the mood to give the converts the sympathetic treatment and attention they need. No true minister of the Gospel would be guilty of wilful neglect, but that there is neglect shown to young converts can easily be proved, and the only charitable conclusion that we can come to is that the ministers concerned do not seriously view the profession made. They are not seized with the importance of the opportunity presenting itself to them. This handicaps all united effort of this kind and makes it sure that, through the omission of needed oversight, many of the young converts will slip back into their former way of life.

Then, again, even if the minister is enthusiastically in sympathy with the work, there are always some of the members of the churches concerned who are not. They show their disapproval by arranging whist drives, or other diversions, during the course of the Mission. They stay away from the meetings, do not hear the missionary, and thus fail to catch anything of the influence of the meetings. If converts from the Mission are brought forward for

membership in their churches they view them with suspicion and dislike, and in many ways create an atmosphere which is bound to kill the spirituality in a number of the young lives, particularly sensitive as they are in their new-found life to every influence, whether it be genial or hurtful.

It is a sad thing that this has to be said, but these are days when no possible advance can be made until facts are faced and dealt with. The amount of criticism to which evangelistic effort has been subjected, and the amount of misrepresentation which has assailed it in certain quarters, show that there are elements within the Church which are bitterly opposed to any advance along this line of progress, and united Missions will never kill this prejudice, or transform this opposition into sympathetic endorsement.

When it comes to evangelism from within the church itself, there is more hope. A great united Mission is sometimes necessary, and no doubt always does good by rousing the community, but, for general purposes, the steady and constant evangelism from within each church is a far more valuable method. There are several reasons for this, as we shall see later.

A minister who sets out to be an effective evangelist to his own people, if he is wise, will not attempt a sudden reversal of the customs of the church to

which he ministers. It would be fatal for him suddenly to blaze out with evangelistic fervour and without warning turn his services into an attempt to get men and women forward to make an open confession of Christ. Unfortunately some men, more zealous than wise, have done this either in their own or in some church which they have been visiting, with the result that they have deepened the existing prejudice. There must be sanctified common sense in this matter, and there must be a great deal of good taste shown in all methods adopted. A domineering, dogmatic assertion of opinions and methods is as much an evidence of a lack of spirituality as any other quality which is alien to the spirit of Christ. Evangelism can go, and should go, hand in hand with the finest culture and the most attractive considerateness of manner. Jonathan Edwards was a cultured gentleman, so was John Wesley, and men like Dwight L. Moody and Henry Drummond have for ever shown us that intense earnestness need not degenerate into boorishness or bigotry.

All methods must be considered in the light of the circumstances under which the work has to be done. In some cases anything like an evangelistic after-meeting will not be attempted by the preacher who wishes for real success, until the church life itself has been transformed. Do not be in a hurry.

The man who cannot wait rarely wins. God is never in a hurry, but He is never late. The inability to wait denotes weakness of purpose, and therefore weakness of character. The main thing, when you set your hand to a piece of work, is to ask God to consecrate you for that work, then you yourself must concentrate on that work, and continue at it till it is accomplished. Take these three words then as your watchwords in this work: CONSECRATION: CONCENTRATION: CONTINUATION.

If the church is not ready for out-and-out evangelistic work, then the methods adopted must be chosen accordingly. If a minister wishes to be an effective evangelist, his preaching will reflect that purpose, although he may never expressly mention it. Every utterance will throb with earnestness, and the sermons will not be vague generalities, they will be the application of vital truths to the members of the congregation personally. A gentleman describing a great preacher to whom he had been listening said: "He seemed to find me out in that big congregation, and he preached to me all the time. When he was driving home some lesson, his outstretched finger appeared to point at me, until at last if he had called out my name I should not have been surprised."

Every man who wishes to bring men to God must preach with the hope that his message will

find people out as they sit and listen. In the tenderest meditation this must be so. In the most earnest denunciation of evil this should be so. Do not say a thing unless you mean it to search some heart in front of you.

Having done this, begin quietly to give a regular invitation after one or other of the services, for anyone needing spiritual help to see you in the vestry afterwards. The week-night meeting is also a good meeting place for any who wish for conversation. It can be intimated by the preacher that after the week-night meeting he will be glad for anyone who desires to speak to him to do so quite freely. The minister who fails to put as much thought and prayer into his week-night meeting as into his Sunday services need never expect to develop a mid-week gathering of any value. Such a meeting can be made the throbbing centre of spiritual work, and at that service it is possible to gather those who form the heart of the church. There is no better recruiting ground for sympathetic co-workers in any advance you intend to make in the way of evangelism.

Begin then by the invitation, which intimates to all concerned that you are anxious to meet those who would care for further spiritual help. Add to that a steady attention to the mid-week service. Either get a big blackboard made, and give illus-

trated studies in Biblical subjects, or set out to deliver a specially helpful series of addresses bearing on the enrichment of the spiritual life. Bring these meetings under the notice of your people, and ask everyone in the church who cares for the coming of the Kingdom to keep that special night free from all other engagements, and you do the same. In this way you will find out who among your people are really in earnest for the spiritual enrichment of the church life. You will also find that some are coming to you for spiritual help, whom you will lead to a direct acceptance of Christ. Instantly suggest to them that they attend the mid-week meeting, where you are dealing with subjects which will help them in their new-found life.

If this method is followed and persisted in, it will not be long before you will find your mid-week meeting becoming larger and larger, and an atmosphere of deep earnestness will pervade it. If the numbers are small, that need not deter you, keep on giving your best preparation to that work and pour out your best thoughts to those who come. Make the meeting a time of prayer, for the first half-hour, or for some given time. Sometimes—at the end of the year, or at the beginning of the New Year, or once a quarter—encourage those present to take part. There is always a surprising response to this, when tactfully done, and it is a

spiritual benefit sometimes for the soul to utter aloud its desires or experiences.

But the main thing is, encourage people to come and see you personally, and have a meeting ground for those in the church who are eager for Christian fellowship and instruction. If the people of the church know that the minister is going to rush in at the last moment to his mid-week meeting, choose the hymns after he gets there, give a hurried, ill-prepared talk, and then rush away at the first opportunity after the close, they will take as much interest in it as he does, and do what he would do if he could—stay away. But when it becomes known that the mid-week meeting is a time for real family worship, when favourite hymns can be asked for and will be sung, when a genial, informal, and yet deeply spiritual atmosphere is fostered, and when the minister will stay afterwards to enjoy conversation with the members of his spiritual family, there will always be a valuable gathering which will lead up to definite and aggressive work for Christ.

At this meeting the minister can open his heart about his hopes and plans for winning souls to accept Christ. Here definite prayer will be made for those who have not yet made the great decision, and in this way a sympathetic atmosphere will be created which will prove congenial to evangelistic work in the church. Even if this work goes on for

a year or two without an evangelistic campaign being entered upon, excellent work is being done. It will be found that the people will be getting expectant, and eager for the work of God to progress, and if meanwhile the minister preaches as if he expected men and women to come to him with their problems and difficulties, a steady stream of inquirers will be found making their way to him, and giving him favourable opportunities of leading them to Christ.

Some ministers feel that this is quite sufficient; and certainly it is a most desirable condition for any church to be in, for such a church is doing evangelistic work, and the harvest is being reaped to a certain extent. Far better be in this position than in a state of cold indifference. But it is not a long step now to a more definite evangelism still. There are always those who will not come to see the minister quietly. Nathanael was led into the light after his own searching of the Scriptures, when he followed his friend Philip; but Paul had to be humbled and laid in the dust before he yielded. Christ led the woman by the well-side into the knowledge of Himself through private conversation, but the three thousand on the day of Pentecost were won by a sermon, and immediately made public confession of their faith.

Whatever methods are adopted, do not get into

a rut. No one method has the value of perfection, but all kinds of methods must be tried, for all classes of people have to be dealt with. Some will come quietly for conversation and thus find Christ. Others will go home and think it out, and come afterwards and announce their decision. Others again must be won immediately, or they will go away convinced but not converted, and by the very peculiarity of their temperaments will become victims of dangerous reaction, and perhaps never allow themselves to be influenced again. It is useless saying, "If these had been persuaded to decide while under conviction they would not have proved steadfast," for there are innumerable instances of splendid Christians who were seemingly won in a moment of unexpected conviction; and the preacher who ignores these will miss some of his greatest victories for Christ.

When the minister, after prayer and consultation with trusted church workers, feels that the time is getting ripe for aggressive action, he must take his courage into both hands and go forward unflinchingly to the ultimate issue. There will be advisers who will be against a public appeal—there always are, but if in your heart you feel the time is ripe you must be prepared to act in spite of adverse opinion. Get your inner circle which meets each week to make the matter a special subject of prayer. Decide that during a certain month you will have a series

of evangelistic services, either on four or five consecutive Sunday nights, or for a certain period of week nights as well as Sundays. For most churches the Sunday night plan will be found very effective. Let the minister resist the temptation which is sure to come to him to invite someone else in to do this work. The time may come when a brother minister or a trusted evangelist may be invited with advantage, but for the purpose of evangelism from within let the minister do the work himself at this stage. These are his people; he has been instructing them, praying for them, pleading with them, watching over them. Many of them love him and look to him for help and comfort, as well as for inspiration and admonition. They know his voice, they understand his outlook, and there are those who are longing for a closer relationship with him.

The first battle to win now is with yourself. You have never given the invitation for public confession of Christ; you may fail; you will not know how to do it; you may lose some of your reputation if no one responds; some of your cultured people will not like it; some may leave the church through it. So the difficulties will throng your mind, but you must win this fight or be utterly defeated, and for ever know that you thought more of the opinion of people concerning you than of

doing your duty to God and to those entrusted to your care.

No minister who draws back at this critical moment can ever realise what crowning joy and service he has lost, but those who have fought this battle (and every evangelistic minister has had to), and won it, have in their hearts a thanksgiving to God which they cannot describe, that in that day He gave them the victory, which led on to other victories and achievements, in the name of their Lord and King.

Having carefully prepared the ground, and having gathered sympathetic helpers around you, who have united with you in prayer and are now creating an atmosphere helpful for the work, launch away with a heart full of trust in the certainty that God will be with you.

Do not attempt to trap your people, but rather be quite candid in your announcement of the fact that on certain Sundays you intend holding special evangelistic services. If there are awkward church officials who may hurt the work by opposition or criticism, see them personally and privately to talk over the whole situation, and invite their prayerful co-operation in the work. There are few who cannot be won by a tactful approach, and much more can be done in a private interview than by first broaching the subject in a meeting. Often

an awkward man will commit himself in a meeting, and although he may have done it impulsively, his stubborn nature, or sense of pride, will force him to stick to that position. Therefore it is better not to allow such a situation to arise, for opposition may deepen into active and hurtful enmity, which might kill the work or injure the Church.

Evangelism may be ridden to death, as many other good things have been. A persistent harping on one string will wear it out. Use common sense and ask God for the gift of gumption, as well as grace. Except in churches which deal with large floating populations, it is not wise to have evangelistic after-meetings, with their appeal for open decision, every Sunday night, in season and out of season. It is quite easy to let it be known from the pulpit that you are always available at the close to meet and help any needing spiritual advice. The special time of reaping in an ordinary church will come at certain set times, as harvest time comes to the farmer.

Supposing you decide that you will prepare for a time of reaping in the early winter months, and another time of reaping at the close of the winter's work, it will be found that for most churches this will meet all the needs of the case, for seekers will be coming quietly at other times as well.

Another good plan, and one which might be

adopted all the year round, is to invite any who are prepared to declare their faith in Christ to remain to the evening communion service. They may participate, or stay to worship without participating in the observance itself, whichever they like, or whichever you feel inclined to stipulate. Then at the close of the service, during the singing of the last hymn, invite any such quietly to leave their seats and occupy the front pew as an open sign of their inward decision. The coming forward in this calm way of the young people of the church, or of some visitor, lends a solemnity to the service which is indescribable. When this is done regularly, it becomes such an institution that many take advantage of it quite naturally, as they feel ready to commit themselves. This plan has been found to yield excellent results; it does not offend those who sincerely object to a Mission, and it affords a regular opportunity of bringing in those who are ready to join the church. After this open confession will follow the personal talk, and then the preparation of the candidates for church membership.

In conducting the evangelistic after-meeting, it is well to give the opportunity for any who wish to leave the church to do so, though care should be taken to encourage all to stay. Let the sermon and hymns, together with the prayer and all other parts of the service, bear on the work in hand.

Enlist the sympathy of the choir master and organist and through them get hold of the choir in this work. Here again a tactful approach works wonders. Take it for granted that they are in their position to lead the people into the Christian life as much as you are. Urge them to throw themselves into the work wholeheartedly, and to make such arrangements with regard to their personal engagements that they will remain to assist in the after-meeting. Better for them not to be in the choir at all on those evenings than to set a bad example to the congregation by stampeding directly the after-meeting is to commence. If they do this you will face a serious handicap right at the very beginning.

On the other hand, a giggling face in the choir may effectually prevent many from coming forward who otherwise would have done so. But nothing teaches like actual experience, and nothing wins like prayerful and tactful consultation with difficult people or organisations. The time may come when a firm, or even stern, stand must be taken, but avoid that by every means in your power. If a choir is a permanent hindrance, or if you prefer not to have them facing the congregation, then arrange for them to leave their seats and occupy some other seats during the after-meeting, where they can help but not hinder. If this is done, then

it is wise, in announcing the after-meeting, to say that the choir will be leaving their seats to occupy other seats, then the people will take their moving as natural, and it will not give the impression that they are deserting you in your work.

The simplest way to arrange the after-meeting, giving those who wish to go the right opportunity without undue encouragement to leave, is to say that, as this is an evangelistic service, it will not be closed in the usual way, or at the usual time. Leave that announcement until after the sermon, then tell the people clearly and earnestly that the service will be continued for about fifteen minutes. Announce a short effective hymn, and request any who wish to leave to do so after the first verse has been sung. Be sure to make it clear that you expect everyone to stay, and promise not to keep them long. If you can point to the time and remind them that the service has been fifteen minutes shorter than usual, therefore the whole service will not be longer than on any other night, it will be all the better.

Keep your promise regarding the length of the after-meeting, or the people will not trust you again. If possible have the front pew empty. Failing that, see that the aisles leading to the inquiry room are clear. As soon as the first verse of the hymn is sung, leave the pulpit and take your

place at the communion rail facing the people. Instruct the church officers beforehand not to move about, otherwise their movements will distract nervous people. It is a serious time, and the smallest detail should be seen to carefully. The minister should be calm and have his plans so arranged that he will know exactly what he is going to do. All instructions will already have been given, so that now he will not need to whisper to this one, or speak to the other one. He will quietly take up his position in front of the people, and as near to their own level as possible without being quite on their level, as they must be able to see him and hear him distinctly.

When the hymn is finished ask the congregation to sit. Then clearly state the necessity of personal trust in Christ and personal confession of Him. There are several apt Scriptural quotations that may be given with advantage. For example, Romans x. 9-11: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed."

Here then in this service they have the opportunity not only for believing on Him, but for

confessing Him. What better place could there be in which to make their first confession than in a church at the close of the day of worship? They will find that this open confession will help them to make it again when they face the world in their business or pleasure. Show the naturalness of confessing any belief that we hold, and the necessity of definitely making our position regarding Christ quite clear.

Avoid stock phrases. Shun terms which the unconverted person does not know the meaning of. Speak in a quiet, persuasive voice as naturally as you would to your own child when setting out a course of action to him. Keep away from words and expressions which some think must be used to show that they are evangelicals, for they act as an irritant to many healthy-minded people who rightly detest cant. Unless you feel distinctly led to do it, and are sure of your man, never ask anyone else to take part in the meeting, either in audible prayer or speaking. Another voice may jar, or introduce a foreign element into the meeting, and besides that, you have promised to keep the meeting within certain limits of time. Do not be anxious, but remember you have delivered your message, and the results are with God. Have you not prayed and prepared? Then confidently go forward, knowing that He is with you.

If you intend to invite people forward to stand

in the front as their act of confession, make that plain. Some prefer that those who come forward shall go direct to the inquiry room. Be clear as to what you are going to do. The personal touch is very valuable, and a good plan is to invite those who now intend making their open declaration to come forward as the closing hymn is being sung, and by shaking hands with you and standing in front of the congregation (or passing into the adjoining room) let it be seen that they are serious in their intention of being known as followers of Jesus Christ.

There are other plans which may appeal to you as better than these. Whichever one you adopt—and none of them is infallible—carry it out well. Have a few trusty workers ready at hand to show the way into the inquiry room. Avoid calling in cranks to help you, and be exceedingly careful that you ask no one but those whose lives are known to be above reproach to assist in this sacred task. The work of the inquiry room will be dealt with in a later chapter.

Do not be staggered or heartbroken if no one comes forward at your first meeting. The most experienced evangelists have meetings in which there is no evident response, and it is not always those who come forward at the first invitation who prove the most reliable recruits. Young people

sometimes like to go away and talk things over amongst themselves. If they know that they are going to have this opportunity of confessing Christ, it brings them face to face with an issue. Do not over-urge the people; do not weary them. It is well to stop between the verses, or some of them, to enforce the invitation, but do not permit over-zealous people to interfere with those to whom you are appealing. The question of personal work will be dealt with in the next chapter, but here and now it may be said decidedly that indiscriminate personal work in evangelistic meetings will permanently repel more than it will win. Besides that, one of the chief objections to evangelism is the interference which worshippers experience at such meetings. The ordinary intelligent young man and young woman in Britain to-day detest meetings which leave them open to the crude approach of enthusiastic, but not always wise, strangers. If Christ Himself stands and knocks, but never thrusts Himself into the privacy of a man's soul, how delicate should every human approach be.

Never permit a doubt to enter your invitation. It is often fatal to begin an invitation by saying: "If there are any present who may possibly care to confess Christ." It is better to begin with the note of certainty: "While singing the following hymn, those who intend making their great decision

and confession to-night will quietly and reverently leave their pews and come to the front." This will help the wavering and encourage the timid. It is a hard step for anyone to take, and every encouragement must be given. An implied doubt will suggest doubt, while the firm reasonableness and expectancy of your invitation will kindle a similar feeling in other hearts.

If the first Sunday yields no apparent reaping, keep on. Many Missions fail because they stop at the critical moment. A ten days' Mission will produce, as a general rule, four or five times the result of a five days' Mission. Many are slow to make up their minds. Many take time to gather their courage. There are those who must get used to a new idea, and as eternal issues are at stake, do not try to force things, or even hurry them. Set out your plan of campaign and stick to it. Press on and on, and the result will ultimately surprise you and fill you with thanksgiving.

Avoid all tricks. Shun anything like deceit. Over-anxious people will perhaps suggest that one or two Christians walk to the front and shake hands with you so as to set the example. Have none of it. If they feel their need of re-establishment, and are taking this opportunity of saying so publicly, that is perfectly honest and right, but the other thing is deceit, for they are walking to the front

to make others think that they are doing something which they are not doing. God needs no such help in His work, and you may safely rely upon the Holy Spirit being present to use you, and to win souls to accept and confess the Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

Think the whole situation over carefully and prayerfully, and ask Him to give you grace to think more of winning souls than of your own reputation or the reputation of your church. The churches and ministers who are willing to be fools for Christ's sake will be honoured and used in this great work.

CHAPTER IX

PERSONAL EVANGELISM

THE most difficult work of the preacher to-day is the work of personal evangelism, for which Dr. John Clifford so earnestly and eloquently pleads. It is not too much to say that this is the work which is most consistently neglected by preachers as a class, and yet it is a field of work which would yield the richest results if attended to properly.

Here is where consistent, prayerful, personal preparation and the wise personal contacts of the preacher will stand him in good stead. It is delicate work, therefore it is all the more essential that it shall be done delicately by those who are spiritually fitted to do it.

In our religion there should be the same intense spirit which characterises other things about which we are intense enough. The love of our country, the love of our parents, the love of our children, demand no apology from us; why then should there be any hesitancy in expressing love for our King, Christ Jesus? We may have differences in

the modes of expressing our thoughts and beliefs; our minds may be cast in varying moulds; our training may have been widely different; our characteristics may be vastly dissimilar; our temperaments may be of all descriptions; our tastes may lead us in opposite directions; but there is one thing essential to us all as preachers of the Gospel. There is one foundation which must be there. There is one spirit which must actuate the whole, burning with increasing heat and intensity; and that is a passionate loyalty to our King, Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son of the Father, our Saviour, our Lord and our Master.

If there be any hesitancy about this, if there be any lukewarmness with regard to this, if the faintest suspicion of disloyalty creeps in here, at once the strength goes from our arm, immediately the power departs from our message, and like a flash we are stricken with palsy. Under such conditions we do not see men flocking to the standard in response to our appeal. Problems crop up like weeds in a garden. The battle wavers and the lines break.

Loyalty to Christ's glorious Person is essential, but with it there comes a demand for loyalty to His methods and commands.

His methods are evident to the student of the New Testament. His ministry was ushered in by His individual seeking for men who were to be His

disciples, and through whom He should send His life-giving message to the world steeped in sin and wandering far from His Father. But His dealings with individuals did not stop with the calling of the first disciples. One of the most enthralling studies in the New Testament is to follow through the four Gospels Christ's dealing with other individuals. They represented all classes socially, and all classes as far as their need was concerned. The educated Pharisee, the wily Sadducee, the keen Scribe, the inquiring Greeks, the lepers, the blind beggars, the palsied sufferers, the women (some pure and some impure), the rich, the poor, the demon-possessed and the sane, the seeking and the critical : in fact the whole world is represented there.

He took them individually as He saw their need, and for each He had time and a message. For the purpose of reaching them He went everywhere where men and women were to be found, with the one purpose of coming into contact with individuals who needed His message of the Kingdom. His work of preaching to multitudes was not allowed to hinder His still greater work of speaking to the individual. His work of healing was not considered complete until He had interviewed the healed in body that he might be helped in soul. He came on to the busy scene of the world's life, seeking and saving the lost individually. And, thank God !

the scourging in the execution chamber, the hours of cruel buffeting in the judgment hall, the frightful sufferings of Calvary, were not allowed to stay that work; for His last act, even on the Cross, was to lead gently the soul of a robber to Paradise. All through, from beginning to end, we see the passion for winning individual lives for the Kingdom. That stands out as Christ's chief method of doing His Father's work and of winning the world.

From my own experience I am compelled to admit that preaching to crowds must be followed by conversation with individuals. For it is in coming into touch with individuals that the most important work is done. Some people may be stirred in a big meeting; but rarely does a man come into the light until he is led there by individual instruction. The getting of a crowd, then, is only a means to an end—that end being the coming into touch afterwards with individuals; and that can be done also in other ways, even if the crowd is never gathered.

Dr. Charles E. Jefferson says in his excellent book, *The Ministering Shepherd*: "The twelve were not simply to proclaim in general phrases a message for the crowd: they were to preach, and they were to deal with men one by one." Christ distinctly puts the test of faithfulness in the work of His Kingdom before us in these words: "And

the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. xxv. 40). Here we are to be judged by our attitude to one individual, and Christ tells us that that individual represents Himself, and our treatment of him is our treatment of Christ Himself. He emphasises this thought in His parable of the lost sheep, for here He reveals the value in God's sight of the individual soul, and says: "I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

Sometimes it seems as if we have not yet grasped the startling truth contained in that startling statement; but evidently the early Christians had, for James says (v. 20): "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Christ's nearest followers evidently considered themselves responsible for individuals. Christ dealt personally with Andrew, and that disciple set to work at once to bring his own brother to Jesus. Philip felt himself responsible for Nathanael, and never rested until he brought that friend to his Master. In fact the New Testament is a history of individual effort; and we know that the fearful

persecution of the early Church scattered broadcast through the land a host of people all seeking opportunities of winning other souls to love their Lord and Master.

The New Testament record, however, is only an example of what was done by thousands whose names we shall never know. Gibbon, the historian, bears his testimony to this, for he says : " It became the most sacred duty of a new convert to diffuse among his friends the inestimable blessing which he had received."

Carlyle also speaks of this fact, for he says : " How did Christianity rise and spread among men? Was it by institutions and establishments and well-arranged systems of mechanism? No! It arose in the mystic deep of man's soul, and was spread by the preaching of the Word by simple, altogether natural and individual efforts, and flew like hallowed fire from heart to heart, till all were purified and illuminated by it. Here was no mechanism; man's highest attainment was accomplished dynamically, not mechanically."

No preacher can reach life to-day unless he sets personal evangelism in front of him as one of the most important bits of work he can do for his Master. The Christians nearest to Christ in point of time considered themselves responsible for the extension of His Kingdom, for the winning of men

to His love, for leading individuals from sin and death to righteousness and life, and they did it by personal evangelism.

Just because ill-advised and ill-equipped individuals have clumsily tried to do this work and have offended the susceptibilities of cultured people, that is no reason why the preacher should decide that he will not do it. It is all the more reason why he should redeem the method from its bad name and unfortunate associations. Careful personal preparation is needed and intimate personal contacts also. It is work which is never easy, and, what is more, it never becomes easy by practice. It is well that it is so, for then we do not become glib in speaking of the holiest experiences of the human soul. If Christ stands at the door and knocks and asks permission to enter, before He takes possession of a man's soul, how much more ought we to tread these ways with holy feet. The man or the woman who, without any sense of decency, attacks anyone and everyone with : "Brother, are you saved?" or with oily tongue speaks of the "Blood" in sanctimonious phrase, may possibly win some to think of holy things, because it is wonderful how the Holy Spirit honours even clumsy and ignorant efforts for God's glory; but there is no doubt that many gentle, cultured souls are repelled and horrified by such an attack.

We need never covet such unabashed approach, and certainly we must not copy it. But the preacher has a singular right to speak in private of the things which he talks of in public, and many people are waiting for that private word and are eager for it. Many there are, too, who will be won in no other way.

Cultivate friendships with this object in view, that, as the Holy Spirit shall lead you, you may lead them into the Kingdom, and some of your finest conversions will come that way. If you wait until you feel it easy to speak, you will wait in vain; but if, after earnest prayer and careful preparation, you seek an opportunity, it will be given you, and you shall have words in that hour which will come from the very presence of God to that soul; to you those words may seem halting and stumbling, but the result will amaze you. The number of those who resent a delicate and tactful approach from someone who feels that he has the right to approach that life is so few as not to be worth reckoning. But even if the approach is resented, what of that? We have nothing to do with results; they are in God's hands. Our duty is to try to win men and women as if everything depended on us, and the results will be more wonderful than we can imagine.

Yet this work is surrounded by dangers; but the

greatest danger, as H. Clay Turnbull says, is that we shall not attempt it at all, and so lose one of the greatest opportunities God gives us for doing His work.

Young people in their teens taken alone, perhaps after a happy meal in our own home, or during a walk through the fields, or maybe on the sudden decision of the moment when we meet them in the street, are often thus won for Christ. Woe betide the man or woman of unconsecrated, inconsistent life who thus attempts to do God's holy work. Nothing but disaster can come from it then, both to the one speaking and the one spoken to. It takes more utter consecration and prayer to do individual work successfully than to preach sermons; but it is one of the greatest means of grace to the worker, for it unveils the lurking sin and unworthiness of the one who is seeking to save.

Look at it how you will, no preacher will ever reach modern life who is shirking this holy duty. If the maid in your house has been neglected spiritually by you, if it does not matter to you whether your tradesmen are Christ's or not, then what right have you to preach to those who gather on the Sunday? If you preach on the Sunday, why should you expect men and women to find Christ through you if you never trouble to enter affectionately into their personal lives and speak a

quiet word of invitation? The pulpit will always be branded as a profession pure and simple when the occupant confines his work to what people think he is paid for; but when he goes out into the highways and byways to invite the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind, to come into the Kingdom, then the world of to-day will know that in their midst there dwells a sincere man whose first aim is that of his Master, "to seek and to save that which was lost," and Christ will be honoured and souls will be saved. What more does a preacher seek than that? What better work can he do for modern life than that?

CHAPTER X

EVANGELISTIC WORK AMONG THE YOUNG

THE hope of those who are desirous of building a new world in which shall dwell righteousness is centred in the children who are growing up in our midst. This has led to several movements, all of which are seeking to claim the young life for the highest and noblest. This is as it should be, for, unless we wisely train the younger generation, we shall lose our greatest hope of ever bringing in the Kingdom of God. The fact that we see in our nation the spreading of revolutionary teaching by the aid of Proletariat Sunday Schools, in which blasphemous doctrines are freely disseminated, shows how even in anti-Christian circles the value of training the thought of children is being increasingly realised. It behoves those who know that Christ is the only hope of the world, therefore, to be up and doing.

We have our Sunday Schools equipped as they have never been before, doing splendid service. But the work of the Sunday School fails in reaching its original intention unless it brings the children into living union with Christ. Statistics prove that the

leakage between the school and the church is enormous, and many attempts have been made to prevent this, but without any considerable success. The only conclusion that can be come to, after experience and investigation, is that we have not been wise in taking advantage of the crises which arise in the lives of our Sunday School scholars. There are definite stages of development in the life of each child, and all the methods in the world which are purely mechanical systems will not avail at such times. Here effective evangelism has a field which will yield an enormous harvest, if the opportunity is seized.

On this subject there are sharply defined differences of opinion, with the result that we are faced by extremes of thought and action. It is of very little use quoting the latest books on Child Psychology, and deciding to refrain from action because these books approve, or disapprove, of certain things. Even psychologists are not infallible, although their help is often invaluable, but to follow the findings of every book written by them would be to get into a hopeless state of despair. Practical contact with work among children is a decided corrective for high-spun theories.

On the other hand, it is a serious mistake to treat them as you would adults, when approaching them with the object of enlisting them for Christ. To close

your eyes to the investigations of sane and scholarly students of child-life is to reject a means of education in effective service, and that is a standpoint which cannot be defended on any but the narrowest and most illogical grounds.

The church which makes no provision for children in its membership is not only making a most serious blunder, but is sinning against the young people committed to its care. How any church can refuse to do anything in the way of establishing a junior church membership is hard to understand. We have always with us those who, like the disciples of old, hinder the children from coming, but we still have Jesus with us saying: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

From the practical side, it is madness not to enlist the children as soon as they can intelligently grasp the elementary principles of the Christian life. They can do this at a much earlier age than most adults realise. Moreover the discouragement of children in their earnest desires to serve Christ and be recognised as His followers has permanently ruined the spiritual life of many, and produced such a state of mind that nothing in after-life could change it. This is beyond dispute, and most workers among children could produce a number of such heart-breaking cases. On the other hand, the most surprising evidences of the permanent results of

child-conversion are to be seen in any meeting when those present who were converted under the age of twelve years are asked to hold up their hands. Generally the proportion is so astonishing that any sane man must wonder how it is that people will continue to theorise, instead of acting on the evidence of their own eyesight.

Nevertheless there is a grave danger attending promiscuous evangelism among children. The work must be done carefully and with great wisdom. Children are apt to move in crowds, and it is easy to produce a mass-movement amongst them which might mean very little, and which at the same time may do great harm to the sensitive souls thus influenced.

In most evangelistic Missions there are a number of children under the age of sixteen years to be found among the registered converts. Often they are lost because the value of their decision or act has not been realised by those who should nurture them. Even if some of them have gone forward because they have seen others going forward, they will respond to the earnest attention and instruction of those into whose care they have been entrusted, so that if their act has not been quite understood by them, with wise dealing they can be brought to a definite experience, which will be the beginning of steady development in the Christian life. In other cases

quite young children come forward with a clear understanding of the essential implication of their act, and these will go on in a natural growth if they are cared for sympathetically and instructed systematically.

Attempts to force a crisis in a child's life are fatal, and are productive of a subconscious antagonism to religious appeals. This can be seen in many soured lives of men and women living in open rebellion and sin, who have come from the homes of devoted Christian parents. Some were subjected in childhood to many earnest but misguided attempts at personal evangelism on the part of visitors to their home. Others had parents who, earnestly desiring to see them converted, forced them to evangelistic meetings, where tactless personal workers seized upon them and tried to persuade them to go to the inquiry room. With others again the parents themselves by persistent urging irritated their spiritual susceptibilities, until the constant friction built up a defensive armour of antagonism within their souls. There is no class in the world more difficult to bring to decision than this class. The old phrase, "Gospel hardened," is a correct description of them. Their souls have become hardened in defence, even as a man's hand may become hardened when constantly brought into contact with objects which chafe the skin. This should be recognised, and any cause of

spiritual friction to a child's sensitive soul should be removed.

Having said this, let it be said at once that it is imperative to bring children under the best influences during the formative period of their lives. If this is done with tact, then any sign of development should be just as tactfully encouraged and cared for. Children are abnormally sensitive to neglect. Their experiences are real and vivid, and if their relating of them is received with a smile of indulgence, or with indifference, which proves that they have not been taken seriously, irreparable injury is done to the soul, and a twist is given which can never afterwards be straightened out.

Modern surgery proves the value of caring for child-life in the tenderest years, when deformities and perversions can often be permanently set right, and abnormal developments brought back to normal. To neglect the spiritual side of the child in these years is to refuse an opportunity which will never arise again, and Christian workers should at least act with as much foresight as those who care for the bodies of the children.

The institution of Decision Day in the Sunday Schools, and Children's Missions, together with such organisations as the Young Life Campaign, have come to stay, and all who love the work of Christ and look for the coming of the Kingdom of God will

ferently pray that those who have the direction of these movements shall have Divine guidance that they may do their work thoroughly. Many young lives are influenced each year at the seaside by the talks which devoted workers give to the children on the sands. Here again a plea may be uttered for co-operation in all such excellent work.

If some people have scruples concerning the type of theology taught, let them beware lest, by their failure to do more than criticise, they reveal themselves, by contrast, in a very unfavourable light. These with whom they disagree have at least the courage of their convictions, and show their transparent sincerity by teaching what they believe to be true and by denying themselves many indulgences that they may lead the child-life of the nation into a knowledge of the love of Christ. While they do this they may be assured of the whole-hearted sympathy of the mass of people who care more for unselfish Christian effort than they do for the varying shades of theological theorising.

Evangelistic work among the young should be removed as far as possible from emotional accompaniments of an undesirable nature. A mass movement in a meeting should be prevented by a calm presentation of a well-prepared plan of invitation. Whereas with adults it is advisable to strike while the iron is hot, with children it is best to dismiss

the meeting without asking for a public declaration of decision. If the speaker, for example, after his address makes it clear that he will be in some adjoining room when the meeting closes, and will be glad to meet those who wish to begin as young soldiers of Christ, the children will be saved from any injurious element which might attach itself to an unintelligent movement to the front of the church. The slightest outburst of emotionalism is fatal to efficiency with young folk. A girl bursting into tears will instantly set many others crying. This must be prevented, both for their own sakes and for the sake of others. It will do the girls themselves nervous harm, it will most probably annoy their parents, and it will at once antagonise the boys present who have reached a critical age. They will decide that, as they are not girls, they have no wish to be associated with tears, so they will show their superiority by sticking to their seats.

The plan of dismissing the meeting and then being content to wait in an adjoining room for any who desire to come obviates all this. Young people like to talk over a situation, and if left alone and not interfered with by fussy, over-anxious people, they will respond after a few minutes' discussion amongst themselves. Not so many will come in this way, but those who do come will mean it, and will understand what they are doing. These can then be spoken to,

and the meaning of the step they have taken must be made quite clear to them. Their names and addresses should be taken so that they may be gathered into instruction circles, or Junior Christian Endeavour Societies, for regular and definite teaching and development.

It is not enough to register the child's decision, or to move the child's emotions. All work in the direction of evangelism amongst the young should have as one of its objects the bringing of the children into union with the Church, that it may be responsible for their oversight and instruction. It is better to get a dozen boys of twelve years of age into real living touch with Christ than it is to have twelve men of sixty years of age testifying that they have at last been saved after lives of sin and shame. The latter are no doubt a testimony to the wonderful power of Christ to save even the worst sinner, but the boys will be living examples of the wonderful power of Christ to keep from sin, the effect of which can never be undone. Twelve lusty lads for Christ may mean twelve mighty men for God's work, leading thousands of souls into His Kingdom.

Young people respond to the appeal for service very readily, and they should not only be taught, but used. It is sometimes difficult and disappointing work, trying to get the best out of young people who

have made profession of conversion, but it is the most important work which can be done for God and humanity. If those engaged in it are desirous of turning boys into little old men, ostentatiously carrying about a Bible, attending prayer meetings more than the playing-fields, cultivating a grave face, developing a faculty for quoting texts and relating unnatural experiences, then they are doomed to bitter disappointment, and will be for ever counting how many backsliders there are among children. Happily this view of things is fast dying out, and that type of unnatural child is not so popular as was once the case.

There is a great field of service open to workers who decide to devote themselves to evangelistic work among the young, if they will wisely use the means at their disposal. A young person naturally loves play, and demands to be always busy at something. This should be borne in mind, and the very restlessness, which is characteristic of all young animals, should not be unduly suppressed or repressed, trying as it sometimes is to the nerves of older people. Enrol them in attractive organisations which should be staffed by sensible, devoted Christian men and women. With their camps and outings, their times for drill and instruction, they afford unique opportunities of getting right into the confidence of the members. These as well as Christian Endeavour

Societies and Guilds, need the best leaders the Church can supply, and offer such openings for service that no one need fear that they will not find sufficient scope for their ability when they wish to apply it to the young life of the nation.

Evangelism among the young must be associated with a healthy common sense, then it yields a multitude of strong Christian lives going out in a living stream to enrich the world. Real Christianity is shown forth in service, and this cannot be too frequently applied when young people are being taught the meaning of Christ's call. Church ceremonies and Christian doctrines are very perplexing to them, but the practical application of all that is meant by these ceremonies or doctrines is readily understood. The teaching of Christ on the forgiveness of enemies, and on love, when only conveyed by word of mouth to a class of vigorous boys who are ready to delight in a fight occasionally and whose watchword is often "I'll pay you out," seems to them something so soft and unnatural that in their stage of development they cannot fully grasp its real meaning. In fact, it must be admitted that the boys who are not vigorous and aggressive are not the ones who commend themselves most to many healthy-minded people. But take such boys for a ramble in the woods, or into the country, camp with them for a few days, and bring them into living

touch with Nature, then teaching becomes related to life.

In rambling through the country lanes, a mother-bird is seen in attendance on her nest of fledglings. She is tremendously agitated by the approach of the group of boys, and flies with nervous cries of concern and affection round and round her nest. She will not desert her brood, but her painful fear is apparent. The little helpless bundles of down in the nest are stretching their necks and opening their beaks, eager for food and attention. Every boy in the group is now intensely interested, and, what is more important, every heart is soft with sympathy for the little mother-bird.

It is the same if, when passing through a village or across a field, a cripple child is met with. It may be a pale-faced delicate little girl in a chair. The sight of such helplessness is immediate in its effect on the hearts of those boys, although they might not admit it. Boys in a case like that will often hand the little girl a sweet, or a flower, or in some way give evidence of a tenderness of which they were never thought capable.

Actual experience of the inner working of a boy's heart is sometimes a revelation. The following is a case in point :

An old woman of eighty-five years of age was in the habit of visiting a married daughter every week

in a distant suburb. Her eyesight was failing, and in other ways she was getting much feebler than she would ever admit. One day when leaving the railway station to cross the crowded, dangerous road, so that she might pay her accustomed visit, she found herself dazed by the roar of the passing motor cars. She hesitated for a moment, when a boy about fourteen years of age who was playing marbles with some companions on the footpath, getting up from his game, came to the old lady and offered to take her across the road. He insisted on her holding his arm, and after safely conducting her across, discovered that she always came by that same train, on the same day each week. Doffing his cap, he volunteered to meet her and take her across the road each week, and also to meet her after her visit and pilot her back to the station. And so he did every week for six months, and his gentleness and considerateness brought a ray of sunshine into her life. She was suddenly stricken down and died in a few hours, but her last thought was for that boy, and her last attempt at speech was to try to send a message to him by the minister. That lad was just an ordinary, careless, troublesome boy, but the sight of weakness appealed to the best within him, and he developed something which all the teaching in the world would never have induced him to covet.

There is an amazing wealth of possibility in the young life surrounding us and there is a rich harvest field waiting for those who are wise enough to become as little children that they may win the children for Christ. The famous African missionary, Dan Crawford, has found that he must "think black" if he is to win the men who are black to know Christ. It is so in every field of endeavour, and nowhere more certainly than in the children's realm.

Pious platitudes are repellent to them, but if you devote your life to them in their natural kingdom of sport, love of activity, and actual contact with God's realm in Nature, you will help them to find how beautiful the love of Christ is. They will then see in the happenings of everyday life the manliness and womanliness of the greatest virtues, and the evidences of the love of God.

There must be sane and careful teaching of the Bible truths, and a prayerful drawing out of the young hearts to find God in Christ Jesus. But this must be allied to a wholesome recognition of the right of young life to enjoy to the full the recreating pleasures which God has made provision for. The tumbling stream, the rolling sea, the flower-decked fields, the grand hills, the joyous birds, the exhilaration of the open air and delightful country will all help to open doors to their better selves. The winner of souls will see that these doors are opened

that the King of Glory may come in, so that all foul and undesirable things may be driven out, and the children claimed for Christ.

Jesus said : " Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones " (Matt. xviii. 10).

CHAPTER XI

EVANGELISM FOR THE OUTSIDER

THE minister who wishes to be an effective evangelist in his own church, and also to reach and win the outsider, has a magnificent field opening before him, if he has the necessary physical and nervous strength to carry him through.

The persistent question which people ask, and by which they often test what they consider to be the value of the results of an evangelistic Mission, is, "Did you get the outsider?" If the getting of the outsider is left to the visit of an evangelist, or if an evangelistic Mission is arranged in the hope that this is the best way of reaching the outsider, then those concerned are doomed to disappointment. Whatever may have been the case when the singing of Sankey and the preaching of Moody roused the nation from its lethargy, it is certainly true to-day that in a large majority of cases the outsider shuns such Missions even more consistently than he does the church. A Mission does prove successful in getting hold of non-church-goers who have relatives or friends in the church, who may be persuaded by

them to come to hear some visiting evangelist, but for the real outsider, except in comparatively few cases, it is not successful as a means of winning him back to the fold.

But the outsider can be won. He will not come to us, therefore we must go to him. Why, with the example of George Whitefield and John Wesley before its eyes, the Church of Jesus Christ has allowed open-air preaching to fall into the back of its programme, cannot be explained. To allow this work to be done chiefly by cranks, or by those who use it as a source of revenue, is to make the most fatal error of which the Church is capable. There are a few churches doing open-air work, but a considerable proportion of them relegate it to ardent but inefficient people to whom they are glad to give some work for the sake of peace. They forget that the Church and the Gospel are being judged by the man in the street according to the representatives and the messages which are being sent to him.

It is useless evading this question. The Church is guilty of terrible neglect in this matter, and the sooner those who are really and sincerely anxious to win the world for Christ systematically set to work to alter the existing state of affairs the sooner will God honour their labours, and use them to stem the tide of revolutionary atheism which is

sweeping over the world. That it is hard and exacting work no one will deny, but the main thing is that it is essential work, and it must be done. There is no work which kills pride in a preacher more quickly than this, for here the members of his audience can walk off if he ceases to hold their attention, and they can interrupt the address if they do not agree with him. The use of manuscript is worse than useless, and that is a fearful test for many, but it is also a splendid training.

One young man in Australia who felt certain, from what a number of old ladies had told him, that he was a budding Spurgeon, had his methods and powers revolutionised in one day by trying to preach a sermon—which had won him approbation in a college sermon class—to a shearing-shed full of men. He was arranging his manuscript on a wool bale which acted as a pulpit, when a clear voice from somewhere in the shed called out: "I say, boss, how do you expect us to remember that lot if you can't remember it yourself?" The question gave him such a bad time that before he left that district he had learned more than he taught, and to-day knows how to hold a crowd under any circumstances.

As in all other evangelistic work, courage is an essential when going into the open air, but there is no place where it can be better learned. The man

in the street will always listen to the speaker who has something to say. All places where open-air orators gather audiences testify to the fact that there are thousands who can be gathered, and a visit to such places will teach more than all the books published. Listen to the socialist, or the infidel, then go on to the other speakers. Observe to whom the crowd listens best, and it will be found that earnest conviction and a positive message win a hearing before anything else. If the crowd is thin around a speaker, it is because he does not possess the passion of conviction, or because he has not enough gumption to adapt himself to the situation, or possibly he lacks the necessary qualifications for the work. An outworn phraseology is useless here, but a vigorous use of the vocabulary which expresses the subject in simple, plain speech, backed by the fire of conviction, will always attract attention and approval.

The seaside was one of Christ's favourite places for preaching, and the beaches afford an excellent opportunity in every nation for this kind of work. Many are idling away the hours in the sunshine, and are glad of any diversion to lend variety to the day. This is the preacher's call; no one knows what he can do until he tries, and it is better to try and fail than to feel that, through lack of courage or conviction, nothing has been done.

For keen young men burning with zeal and fired by daring, yet at the same time equipped by education, there is untold work of vast importance to be done by the "Group system." The socialists of a certain type are using this method every summer in large cities, and it is very effective. A group of enthusiasts will walk up a busy street in the evening, and while keeping within sight of each other, they separate, then each one eventually accosts a man who may be standing at the street corner, or looking into a shop window. The manner of approach is quite simple; it may be a match is asked for, or the time, and this is made an excuse for a conversation. Perhaps the question is asked: "What do you think of the political situation?" or, "What is your opinion of the strike in the coal mines?" Each man soon finds someone who is ready enough to talk, and the two soon become a group. The central man so arranges it, that those gathering around are led into the conversation; they interject questions, or venture opinions. He is not now particularly interested in the first man he spoke to, but in all who care to take part, and it is his business so to present the case for the cause which he is espousing that by questions and answers he is teaching those who form the group. As can be seen at once, he must have the subject of discussion at his finger-tips, and in case of an argument he

must be so ready with his facts that he shall at least make out a good case and win converts for his cause. It is amazing how the crowds are being educated by this system. It can be seen at work in Glasgow and Edinburgh on any Saturday or Sunday evening in the summer, and in some streets there must be hundreds gathered in these small groups, discussing and being educated in socialism.

Have we men who dare do this, or something similar, for Christ? Perhaps the university students of to-day who are doing so much to try to kindle a fire for Christ will venture into this field. If they do, they may be sure they will be doing much to spread the true light of the Gospel of Christ. They will probably meet opponents as keen as themselves, but with the training which constant practice would give, added to educational advantages and religious sincerity, they will win converts of no mean order. Moreover it will prove to the cynical world that there are educated men sincere enough to go about seeking to win the world for Christ without being paid for it. Then, if these disciples have a knowledge of economics and sociology, and can so present their case as to prove that Christianity, if rightly lived, will set wrongs right, will remove injustices, and will make earth into a heaven for the children of men, many who have turned from the Church

because they consider it a useless institution will turn again to join the new crusade.

It is simply an evidence of ignorance to denounce all socialists as infidels and haters of real religion. Many of them are longing for what every true Christian is longing for, but they have not been brought to realise that all reform must begin in the hearts of individuals, otherwise, given a reformed State, the unreformed citizens would soon bring in chaos again. There are many cases of keen socialists having been won for Christ through the preaching of the Gospel in such a way that they were led to see that Christianity, literally applied to the life of the world, would settle every human dispute, while there can never be a real brotherhood of man except as men come into relationship with one another in the family of God, through Jesus Christ.

But whatever view is taken, nothing can alter this fact that Christ is the revelation of God to a stricken world, and without Him there is no hope for the salvation of men. This being so, it is not sufficient to preach this truth in churches, to which the mass of the people are not going, and it is not sufficient to attempt to propagate it by means which do not reach the untouched millions outside, If strong men of consecration and education dare go to their fellows in the open air, they will certainly

meet with opposition, but they will also, just as certainly, win converts for Christ.

To this work the best preachers and the best singers in the land should be invited to dedicate their talent; and the summer months might then see every point of vantage in the kingdom being used as a strategic centre. Half the fears which men have regarding their inability to stand the strain would disappear if they would only try. By learning correct methods of voice production, and the art of deep breathing, throat troubles would be avoided. By praying for a passion for souls, the many very plausible arguments which can be called up to justify keeping out of this crusade would disappear. But even if the dangers feared really existed, what then? Do not Christ's followers take risks in these days? Are they not as much in earnest as the Socialists or the Bolshevists? If the world is to be won, there never was a more important time than now in which to press the battle to the very gates. It is easy to demonstrate that at the present rate of making disciples through conventional methods the Church of God is losing its opportunity. Would Christ go into the open air? Would He have conversations with strangers in the streets? Would He talk to the thousands on the sands if He was here in the flesh to-day? Yes, He would, and He expects us to do it, for He has

entrusted to us the work of making disciples for Him.

Another way of reaching the outsider is by holding meetings in workshops and mills where such gatherings can be arranged during lunch hours. Here again the people must be won by direct, unconventional speech. Regular visits are appreciated, when the messages given are free from all hint of patronage, and are marked by sincerity mingled with common sense. The note of conviction, added to the fact that the speaker is giving up his time to advance the cause he believes in, will always find some measure of response and gain a hearing. But those who are meaning to attempt this work must be willing to cast aside all cut-and-dried methods. A conversational style, something to be said which will grip the attention, the free use of illustrations which are from life and have a clear bearing on the point in hand, will attract attention and inspire many a conversation or argument in the workshop after the speaker has gone.

We should so act that outsiders must be made to admit that Christianity is a living force, inspiring men to go out with a burning message. It does not matter that we shall raise opposition, for it is indifference which we have to fear most. Contempt for religion because of its unreality is the most killing thing with which we have to deal. Argu-

ments can be answered, opposition will act as an advertisement, conversations lead to investigations, and the fact that religion is producing men and women who care most of all for the advance of the Kingdom of God, no matter what it costs them, will have to be accounted for. This is the sermon the world needs preaching to it just now, by highway and sea side, in workshop and mill, at street corner and in university. It will set a standard which will demand the application of the principles of Christ to the business of the world, and this will remove the reproach which is well-nigh unanswerable: that many men who stand well in their churches do not stand as well in their business circles, because their profession of religion will not stand the test of everyday investigation.

Although going after the outsider may not yield as many professions of conversion as are tabulated at the big evangelistic Missions, it will be doing a work which few such Missions are doing in these days, for it will be forcing the outsiders to think of Christ, to examine His claims, and to decide what their attitude is towards Him. The ultimate result must be that many will turn to seek and find Him who is the only hope of the world; while the immediate result to the churches will be an influx of many through the preachers who have compelled the wanderers to come in.

CHAPTER XII

THE MESSAGE OF THE EVANGELIST

THERE has arisen in later years the idea that the evangelistic sermon, or address, is something thin and emotional. The consequence is that now it is very generally taken as a matter of course that an evangelist is not a preacher who could acceptably occupy the pulpit of a church which is attended by educated people. He may do as an occasional supply, but for him to minister there regularly would be impossible, as his style of preaching could not be sustained.

One regrettable result of this prevalent idea has been to divide the ministry into two classes, one large and the other small. The larger consists of those considered to be mentally and educationally fitted for the work of teaching in religious matters; while the smaller class consists of those who have the gift of evangelism and who are not expected to teach, but simply to reap the result of the sowing of others. Members of the educated class have sometimes been willing to bear with an occasional

visit from one of the other class, deciding in their own minds that when the evangelist has gone they will correct any wrong emphasis or lack of teaching.

Two hurtful results to the work of the Church have arisen, among others, as a consequence of this. First, the work of evangelism has often been neglected by the educated ministry; the feeling that such work is not suitable for their style of preaching having developed, in many cases, into the unexpressed yet subconsciously accepted idea, that it is also derogatory to their position and dignity. Secondly, evangelism having been relegated to men who are not expected to preach sermons which would pass the test of intellectual enlightenment, the evangelistic appeal has often outraged the intelligence of those who delight in culture and refinement. These either reject all evangelistic effort as a consequence, or bear with it as an obnoxious necessity, to be endured as medicine after long intervals.

Thus we have the educated men who have pulpit gifts, but have turned away from delivering evangelistic messages. These are thought the best men for a certain class of church, with the very evident result that those churches get little, if any, evangelistic work done among them, and a generation of worshippers is developed without the fire or conviction

born of evangelism. Thus aggressive work for God is gradually superseded by cold complacency and exclusive respectability. In undesirable contrast, we get those who, in the heat of their evangelistic enthusiasm, turn away from scholarship as from the devil, and have no sympathy at all with anything which is not in the nature of an exhortation, calling men and women to repentance.

This is disastrous to a well-balanced church, and certainly retards the work of the Kingdom. The position has come about gradually, and has been accentuated by the various rifts which have been caused in recent days over matters of Biblical criticism, and other things about which the Christian community has been divided. No opinion on these matters is attempted here. This book has one mission—to plead the cause of effective evangelism. But this much can be said without hesitation: If it is true, as some confidently assert (and no such admission is being made here), that evangelists are generally obscurantists, that does not in any way prove anything against evangelism. If it is true, then it proves that those who consider themselves fitted to speak with assurance on matters of importance, because of their education and gifts, have so neglected evangelism that the only men left to carry on this most important work are not properly equipped.

But it is not true that culture and evangelism are incompatible. It is a fallacy nurtured in snobbery. It may please some, who hate to be disturbed in their religious life, to propagate the idea, but in saying so, and in leading others to think so, they are helping forward the paralysis of the Church and retarding the work of the Kingdom.

Truth has nothing to fear, but everything to gain from education and investigation; and evangelism is truth demanding a verdict. Looking back over the history of the Church, it can be seen that every new movement which struck the fettering shackles of obscurantist methods and teaching from the limbs of the Christian community, issued in blazing evangelism. Protestantism, Independency and Methodism are all examples of this, and many of the leaders of these movements, who were most ablaze for the conversion of their hearers, stood in their day for education and culture.

The message of the effective evangelist should be the best he has to give. Just because God has seen fit to use men of no education to win notable conquests for Him, it does not imply that the lack of education is a necessity for evangelism. God in His sovereign grace can use whom He will, and He will be dictated to by no one; but if we offer our choicest gifts to Him, they will be used for His glory and the blessing of mankind. A Paul converted,

dedicated, humbled, and filled with the Holy Ghost, not only gains converts, but builds a church which extends its conquests into all lands.

At this juncture, the lesson to be learned by Christian men of education and pulpit gifts is, that the greatest need of the world is not so much to hear what they have to say about a thing, but to know what God would say through them. For those who wish to learn the secret of preaching which at once grips the people and reveals God, there has been no better book written than the New Testament. The greatest teacher of all is Jesus Christ, and His way of appealing to the human heart and intellect is set out on every page of the four Gospels. Then follows a record of the various addresses delivered by those who went out to preach in His name, all of which repay a careful study, for they reveal passionate conviction, directness of utterance, wealth of illustration, and a startling application of the truth. The Jews were forced to face the issue from their standpoint; the Samaritans were approached in a way which appealed to them; the address to the eunuch commenced at the point where his investigations had begun to baffle him; but the Greeks were shown a new light which made intelligible what they thought was unknowable.

The decline of the theatre and the vogue of picture palaces is amazing. The most obvious truth is that

humanity likes to see things. In a theatre much depends on the voices of the people on the stage, and when these are inaudible the evening is spoilt. Then again one play takes the whole evening, and unless it is unusually attractive interest flags. But with a picture show there is endless variety. If one picture fails to interest, there will be another one shown which may be better. If a humorous episode is wanted, it is sure to be there. If something tragic is sought for, it will be supplied. An audience is taken to various parts of the world in an evening, and new experiences live before them. Phases of life which they never dreamt of are presented to them, and the drab existence which many of them have to endure is shot through with colour and they are taken out of themselves.

People are even keener to see than to hear. Imagination plays such a large part in life that anything which feeds it is eagerly sought after. This is a truth which should be grasped by the preacher, and especially by the man who wishes to be effective as an evangelist. Christ made people see things. He did not spend much time in argument, but He painted pictures. He took His audiences in thought out into the fields and showed them the lilies and the daisies, the man sowing, or the shepherd searching for his sheep. He took them into a house to watch a woman sweeping and looking for her lost piece of

silver, or He went with them over the hills to the far country to follow the adventures of the prodigal son, and then moved their hearts as He brought them back to enter into the joy of the welcome home by the old father. The parable of the rich man in hell was a picture, so was the story of the good Samaritan, and not one of His pictures failed to achieve the desired result, because the details were familiar to His hearers and the lessons were apparent.

In preaching, as in most other things which really matter, if success is to be achieved, personal choice has often to be set aside for the sake of efficiency. To put it quite plainly, few people can follow a complicated argument, so effective preaching, except in rare instances, does not come along that line. A scholar often thinks he is making himself very simple to his audience, while the latter sit and wonder what he is driving at. It is like the story of the man who met his friend coming out of church and asked him: "Was the minister a good preacher?" "A wonderful preacher," was the answer. "What was he preaching about?" was the next question. "I don't know; he did not tell us," was the reply. Any preacher can easily learn a lesson if he will take the trouble to inquire from half a dozen of his congregation, a week after the delivery of an ordinary sermon, what he preached about the previous Sunday. If he used a striking illustration they will tell him

of that, when they can tell him of nothing else, which will often be the case.

A well-known English preacher tells how he met a man one day who stopped to thank him for a sermon he had preached the previous summer at a seaside town. "It was really a splendid sermon," said the man, "and I shall never forget it as long as I live." The minister was anxious to know which sermon it was, as he had preached on several Sundays in the same church, so he asked what he had preached about. The man tried hard to justify his thanks by remembering the subject, but he could not. "What was the text?" asked the minister, but the man assured him he could never remember a text at any time. Wishing now to cover the confusion of the one who had been so kind as to show such appreciation, he said: "Well, perhaps you could tell me one thing I said, and then I will be able to tell you what the sermon was about, and so refresh your memory." "Ah!" said the man, "I can do that. You used a most excellent illustration which fastens the sermon in my mind as one of the best I ever listened to," and he forthwith proceeded to tell him the children's story for that morning, and the preacher realised that, though the sermon had been absolutely forgotten, the lesson conveyed in the children's story had remained.

The power of a good illustration is incalculable

and if the preacher cares more for the effect he is producing on lives than he does for the opinions of a few people regarding his powers, he will develop all his latent skill in the use of illustrations, as he would any other gift of God. No one would advise the cultivation of "anecdotalage," as it has been called, but even that is no worse than filling half an hour, or longer, with words which convey little to the ordinary mind. At least some lesson will be deduced from the stories, while sometimes no meaning may make itself clear from the other.

The best illustrations are to be found in the everyday world by which we are surrounded. These will always be fresh and attractive, for they will bear upon them the impress of the personality of the preacher. If they live in his memory, if he sees them in his own mind, then they will live in the minds of his hearers. The world is full of incident and interest. Observe Nature at work while you are on holiday, and then cast your mind back and recall what interested you most, and use it to interest and teach someone else. Did you ever see a rabbit scuttling away from your approach, and then lying quietly in a bunch of bracken which was nearly the same colour as itself? It represented a very ordinary happening, but it interested you at the time. You thought of the timid creature crouching there, with its heart beating as if it would burst, and its eyes alight with anxiety,

watching your every movement. A dog sniffing about just missed it because it lay so quiet, and Nature had arranged that its coat should be the same colour as the ferns in which it hid. The incident added pleasure to your walk, and it would also add power to your talk if you cared to descend from your usual height so as to drive home the lesson you were endeavouring to teach. They will forget your argument, but they will not forget your rabbit.

See the beach there, all seared and soiled after the picnickers have departed. Papers are strewn about, footmarks are everywhere, and the handiwork of the children is much in evidence in castles, ditches and tunnels. But the tide is rising, and after it has receded all is clean and beautiful again. Your memory takes you back to that incoming tide, with its lapping waters making music at your feet. Steadily and softly it came in, like a caress, and just as softly it went out, but its work was done and the shore was washed and made ready for the next company of holiday-makers to enjoy themselves. It is a very commonplace incident, to be seen every day, but if you bring it to the tired workers of the city after a week's daily contact with the grime and sin of the world, it will at once translate them to the seashore. They will feel again the breath of the ocean on their faces, and their nostrils will drink

in the smell of the mighty deep. The lapping tide will take them away from the thought of their nerve-racking toil, and the sight of the water will tell them of the love which constantly washes away the dirt of sin and the scars of anxiety, preparing them for a new day's demands.

You visited the gardens when the flowers were filling the air with their fragrance and attracting the eye with their beauty. Did they not speak to you of the loving Gardener who tends the souls of men, gently and persistently using every endeavour that they too may become beautiful and fragrant? You were glad that you went to the gardens that day, but did you put the flowers in your sermon on the following Sunday? The dirtiest child in the filthiest slum will forget its misery if it sees you passing with a bunch of flowers, and if your heart is soft enough to prompt you to put a posy into that blackened little hand, you will see a new light in those eyes, and an unexpected pleasure on that wizened face. Flowers attract everyone, and they teach lessons of beauty as few things can.

Who does not love the birds? The cheeky sparrows, or the pigeons round St. Paul's, or the tiny tit clinging to the up-ended coconut! The hedges are full of them in spring, and the sky sends down showers of song as the larks climb heavenward. The man who derives no pleasure from the birds is

not normal; God careth for them. Have you ever seen anything in their busy life worth remembering or telling?

A young Englishman on an Australian goldfield, down on his luck, stained by sin, when passing a store heard an English thrush singing in a cage which was hanging on the verandah. The tears blinded his eyes, and the sobs would not be held back. In a second he was back in his mother's cottage in England and the associations of his childhood came surging into his memory. It was not a big step to the post office, and a long-forgotten letter was written to a waiting heart across the water. Memory aroused drove him to the minister's house, and that visit proved the gateway of heaven to his soul.

Our cities are full of men and women who were born in the country; they are often tired and depressed, and many times their hearts yearn for the days of their childhood. Outwardly they are successful, prosperous, satisfied city-dwellers; inwardly their hearts are in the lanes and villages of old England. The singing of a bird, the peeping of a field-flower, the scent of roses, the lapping of the tide, the scuttling of a rabbit in your sermon will unlock doors and touch memories as none of your arguments will, and when the best is stirred within, the soul becomes sensitive to the reality of God and His love.

The best book of illustrations in the world cannot compare in value to the book you yourself will compile from your own life. The preacher of forethought will keep such a book and write in it frequently. It will become a mine of wealth to him, taking him back over forgotten incidents, and refreshing him many times as he recalls the details hinted at. A striking incident narrated in the newspaper can be cut out and pasted in; this is something from life, and the fact that some of your hearers recognise it when you use it only adds to its value. They will not have realised the lesson which it contains, and even if they have, the very familiarity of the thing makes it more arresting. The ordinary mind (and most of us are very ordinary) likes to hear what is familiar, and is doubly impressed when an important truth is illuminated by it.

British people in Australia love to hear a reference to their own country, and when a visiting preacher talks of the Home-land, their faces quiver with emotion. Australians in England respond similarly when they detect the note of home in a sermon given from a British pulpit. The recalling of past happy associations appeals to human nature, it arouses interest, it arrests attention, and the lesson conveyed is never forgotten.

An illustration must live; the dull repetition of a story is useless. The telling of an event so highly

coloured as to bear upon it the impress of improbability only antagonises and detracts. The danger of using a striking story from a popular book is apparent. If it struck you it struck a hundred preachers all up and down the land. To give it to your own people may be all right, but if you give it in a strange pulpit there is the likelihood that some other visitor has used it before you, and the thing palls upon the congregation. Especially is this the case if someone has forgotten the details and finishes the story incorrectly, for then the critical sense in the hearers is aroused and all the rest of the sermon is discounted. But illustrations from your own life, or from the daily life of the world around you, if well used, are fresh and live before the people.

Some illustrations obscure, they are dragged in and instead of being windows to a sermon they are blinds darkening the room and shutting out the sunshine. The illustration must grip you, or it will not grip through you. The preacher must live in the story, or he will not make the story live before the people. Did your heart glow when that little bird found food on your window-sill? Well, let it glow again when you tell about it. A stiff, conventional figure in a Geneva gown, standing erect and speaking in an artificial voice of doubtful intonation, telling in a wooden way of a laughing child chasing a nimble kitten over a smiling lawn, would produce as much

effect as a man with no gift of humour trying to tell a funny story, who finishes up by missing the point altogether, and then adds: "But we did laugh."

Whatever the members of any congregation think about themselves, underneath the different veneers of which some are so proud there are very human hearts and feelings, and a living story told so as to form a word-picture will reach the real self, and that is what the preacher is after. The man who has set before him the ideal of being an effective evangelist will keep this in mind as he prepares his sermons. Whether he is out for the express work of bringing men and women to decision, or whether he is bringing instruction to established Christians, the same thing holds good. There is no vehicle of instruction so effective as a picture.

The preacher must not attempt to proclaim anything about which he has a doubt; he must not take his doubts into the pulpit. Every man must pass through stages in his thinking, but there is never a stage in which he is robbed of all certainty. He must be positive in all his statements, and preach with the note of authority. The prophets startled the nation with their messages and they prefaced them with "Thus saith the Lord." That was their definite position and that was their authority, and what the world is waiting for to-day is the message

of the prophet. If a man is not certain that God lives, that sin is real, that Christ saves, he had better be a self-respecting stone-cracker than an apologetic propounder of hesitating suggestions which are as stones to the hungry multitude. Let it be admitted at once that the average person is seeking for God and is sick to death of diffident attempts to elucidate complex problems which have little bearing on life. The day has come when we must have mighty men of God in the pulpits, preaching a Saviour who is able to save to the uttermost and from the uttermost ; a Saviour great enough to save the greatest sinner from his greatest sin. If the preacher has any doubt whether Jesus Christ is such a Saviour, then he had better close his books and his study and take a few weeks off, and get down with the Salvation Army or into the work of one of the great Central Missions, and ask them to introduce him to some of the people whom Christ has lifted from miserable slavery into the nobility of the children of God. He will soon find that Harold Begbie's *Broken Earthenware* could have been enlarged into hundreds of volumes, and then the half would not have been told.

The man who doubts the all-sufficient Atonement of Christ has no right in the Christian pulpit, for while he remains there he is a blind leader of the blind. There is the certainty that Christ saves, and

saves now, and saves for ever, and the man who does not believe it had better give up all hope of ever preaching anything for which the world is hungering. If any preacher is not certain of this, for the sake of all that is high and holy, for his own sake, and for the sake of humanity, let him get into touch with the terrible reality of damning sin, and in contrast see the glorious work of grace evidenced in countless lives once as bad as the worst he can find; and then let him get to his knees as humbly as a child and ask God to enlighten him with His Holy Spirit, that he may see the vision and tell the wondrous news before it is too late.

God's messenger may begin with the confident assurance that he has the authority of God for his work, and he has a Gospel which he can unhesitatingly proclaim. He must tear from his heart all fear of man, or he will deserve to fail. No matter whether the hearers will gladly hear or not, the fact remains that the less they desire it the more they need it. His responsibility to God must come first, and from God he will assuredly get power over his own cowardice and power to prevail with his own people.

With the conscious equipment of authority, armed with a positive Gospel, he must now preach with an application that shall be unmistakable. The applying of the message is its most important part. The

Bible abounds in essential truths, and is filled with arresting incidents, and all through its pages there is material enough to last an eternity. Know the Bible, for it is not enough to be familiar with books about the Bible—know the book itself. It can speak for itself, it can teach for itself, and if studied with reverence and earnest prayer, with a mind so open that no preconceived ideas shall be allowed to stand in the way of any conviction which may arise, its words will live again for the student, and sermons will leap from its pages faster than any man can use them. Write down every fleeting thought which comes, or it will be lost; thus the preacher will find material growing up under his hand which, coming white hot to him, will go white hot from him to his hearers. Although all may not agree with it, nevertheless there is a growing feeling, which certainly contains more than an essence of fact, that the application of the truth is the chief task for the Sunday services and the teaching of details is the work of the Bible classes and other similar organisations, which ought to meet during the week and on Sunday afternoons. Never present generalities, no matter how beautiful they sound, for the main object of preaching is to deal directly with pressing needs.

In it all let a great tenderness run through the severest messages. A scolding preacher, a fault-finder, a grouser, is never effective. The man who

gets a grievance and takes it into the pulpit with him had better get a delivery van to move his furniture elsewhere. There are people in every congregation who have as much to put up with as any minister, and his duty is to forget himself in thinking of them. Tenderness begets tenderness. There is no need for softness or sickly sentiment, but tenderness is strength shot through with love. No compromise, but a strong declaration with a tender man proclaiming it, is the ideal. Warning, entreating, encouraging, pleading, God's ambassador will herald the good tidings from every possible angle, but as the spokes of a wheel find their security in the centre, so every truth will find its foundation in Christ Jesus, the only hope of the world.

The preacher who is afraid of simplicity in his utterance will never be effective. The clearest evidence of culture is the gift of putting great thoughts in the most easily understood language. The words of Christ were so wonderful in their depth of meaning that they have kept the world thinking ever since, and still their greatness has not been fully comprehended. Yet He taught in such simple language that all could understand. This should be the aim of those who desire to help the world. It is far easier to use the phrases of the text-books or of the classroom than to put illuminating thoughts into everyday speech. When this is lacking,

education is far from complete, for education is something more than the teaching of the schools.

To be really effective, the soul must be kept open to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Before going to face the people, be quiet before God and lay at His feet the work to be done. Make sure that His approval is on the task in hand, then go forward conscious of the fact that He has promised, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The man who thus faces his people is God's man, equipped for his work as were the prophets of old and the disciples as they went out on their mission. Let nothing disturb the preacher who in this way goes forward to do a definite work. Human advice after that should not be allowed to alter the decision made, for such advice may come from someone who has not specially sought Divine guidance, and that advice may overthrow all that God has planned. Reliance on God is an absolute necessity, and then real success will follow.

CHAPTER XIII

PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING A MISSION

ALTHOUGH the ideal has been set out that every minister should be his own evangelist, yet at the same time it must be recognised that ideals are rarely reached. Therefore it is better to aim at the highest possible, then a nobler height will be attained than if the aim is low. The warning must be repeated with emphasis that if, in the anxiety to get necessary and urgent work done, methods are adopted which in the past have brought a measure of discredit to evangelism, then the evil results will repeat themselves and the work of the Kingdom will in the long run be retarded and not helped.

As the Church finds itself to-day poverty-stricken by the dearth of men who have experience in evangelism, unless harvesting is undertaken it seems certain that the opportunity will pass and be lost. It must be acknowledged that some ministers, who have laboured faithfully and well, and have been able by the power of God to bring some of their people to the point of decision, feel that a visitor

could reap with a wider sweep and a more effective stroke. Sometimes also a whole community feels that a united effort will serve more than one good purpose, for not only will it bring souls to decision, but it will bring the ministers and churches together in a new bond.

When any of these positions has been made clear to those concerned, after seeking God's guidance, then the next thing to be considered is the Mission itself and how it shall be conducted. From this work some men who have dared reap in their own churches will shrink with a natural timidity, and thus so few are willing to undertake the responsibility that an unattached evangelist may be the only choice left to those seeking for a helper. The greatest care is needed here, as the number of tried and trusted men to choose from is limited; eagerness for the work may lead to hastiness of action. In these circumstances a stranger whose career has not been thoroughly investigated is often invited, and as a consequence many Missions have been unsatisfactory in their after effects, which cannot be wondered at. The value of a Mission cannot be estimated until twelve months after its conclusion, and then, perhaps through the visit of an undesirable type of helper, when the shouting has died away it may be found that little of good remains.

This is a very delicate thing to write about, and

only urgent necessity, deep concern for the cause of Christ and the good of His Church, prompts it to be done here. If those who have had a lifelong experience in this work refuse to speak, who will? Then if disappointment or even disaster comes, who will be to blame?

Let those who contemplate the organising of a Mission remember that a real revival never comes into being through human organisation. It is the result of heart-searching, heaven-searching prayer and the faithfulness of God's remnant who have never ceased to lay hold of His promises, even when the skies seemed as brass and the earth as iron. A time of evangelism may be one phase of a revival, but it must be understood that for any Mission to be successful there must be a harvest-field ripe for the reaper. Revival sometimes breaks out in the most unlikely places, but successful evangelism is for the prepared place. No one can clearly state the absolute difference, but there is a difference, although a time of harvest may be the starting time of a genuine revival. Evangelists are sometimes invited to hold a Mission in a dead church "to waken it up." This is a fatal policy, and arises from a misconception of the true work of an evangelist. The dead church needs the earnest and faithful attention of a Spirit-filled minister of God, who shall gradually gather around him those who

will work and pray, sow and wait, until the time of harvest comes, then it will be time enough for the evangelist to be called in, or, better still, for the faithful pastor to be his own evangelist.

Preparing for a Mission, whether in a church or a community, is like preparing for a harvest. If the preaching has been done faithfully, if prevailing prayer has been offered and in the churches there is a spirit of eager hope and desire, then the most essential work has been done. Long before the actual preparatory work for the meetings themselves is entered upon, before even the missionary has been invited, there should be special seasons of prayer, when the work of God is laid at the feet of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit is sought. The ministers must foster this spirit of prayer and urge their people to erect again the broken-down family altars, that there they may gather with their children and plead with God for the blessing for which they crave. They must exhort their people to cultivate more and more the habit of private prayer, where they shall come to God with their petitions. The formation of prayer circles to meet in private houses at set times is a strong asset, for thus whole cities and districts may be filled with praying bands pleading for the spiritual life of their community. Individuals should also be encouraged to make private prayer lists of those for whom they

will make intercession every day, and for whose conversion they will work in every legitimate way.

A prayerless church is a powerless church. If we could only realise what a weapon is at our disposal in prayer we would use it unceasingly, and find it our delight to be thus called of God to the work of intercessors on behalf of a stricken and sinful world. Therefore call the people to prayer, join with them, put it first in all work of preparation; remind them that throughout the world there are thousands who give themselves to private prayer every Saturday night, asking the Almighty to make bare His arm and revive us again, and persuade them to set aside at least fifteen minutes every Saturday night for this purpose. If this is done, in some places the blessing will be realised in conversions long ere the special work begins.

The immediate work of preparing for a Mission in an individual church is similar to the preparatory work necessary for a great united Mission, although in the latter case it must be on a greater scale. If the individual church Mission is expressly for the worshippers in the church itself, then beyond the call to prayer there will be few preparations except with the minister, and he will be either preparing himself and his messages, or he will be prayerfully considering whom he will invite to conduct the

Mission. Especially with an individual church Mission, it cannot be too strongly urged, obtain as the evangelist a minister who through experience knows all the circumstances attending regular pastoral work. If he is a personal friend of the pastor, all the better; if not, be sure he is a man in sympathy with the work going forward in that particular church. The minister of the church must be willing to hand over the conducting of the meetings to his invited helper, for as a captain hands over to the pilot the control of his ship when port is sighted, so it must be here. Invite no one to whom you cannot do this without hesitation. But the minister will, if at all possible, remain at his own church throughout the entire Mission. Let nothing take him away, not even the supplying of his friend's pulpit. Make some other arrangement about that, unless it is absolutely impossible to do so. He has to carry on when the Missioner has gone, it is therefore of vital importance that he should be present all through the Mission. First, that he may enter into the spirit of all that is going on and get the blessing himself, and second, that he may be there to deal with any special cases which may need attention. His knowledge of his people through his pastoral work gives him a peculiar advantage in some instances, and the missioner will be glad for him to deal with them. The people also feel a

satisfaction in having their own minister present, and it is right that they should.

Do not spoil the Mission by arranging a series of speakers or by limiting too seriously the number of days on which the meetings are to be held. A series of speakers is rarely a success in an evangelistic Mission, as each comes with a distinct personality, while there is no natural sequence in the addresses given. The result is that whereas the man on Monday night may lead the people to a certain point, the speaker on Tuesday night may go over the same ground again, or so clash with the previous address as to cause an anticlimax. The length of time is also of great importance. In all Missions it invariably happens that when the meetings are held for ten days the last four days will bring in more converts than the previous six, and sometimes when the first six days have only brought a few to decision, the last four will be crowded with work dealing with those who are coming forward to confess Christ. This work cannot be hurried, and it often happens that those who come last are best. They may have cautious natures, or they may have big issues to decide, but when they do make up their minds it is final, and they prove of considerable value to the work of the Kingdom. A week's Mission is often disappointing, whereas if it had been continued for an extra two or three

days, disappointment would have been turned into joy.

In preparing for a Mission by which it is hoped the outside life of the community will be reached, after the spiritual preparation has been going on for some time the advertising must be thoroughly arranged. Each place has its own peculiarities, so no hard and fast rule can be laid down, but, however it is done, the widest publicity should be given to the fact that such services are to be held. Wherever possible the co-operation of the newspapers should be secured. It must be remembered that newspaper work is a business, therefore no one can expect to use the columns of the Press for the purpose of advertising unless they are prepared to spend money. In this work it is as well to secure the influential support of some man of business who advertises, and a word from him, or from a group of business men, will often help considerably. A small paragraph appearing at intervals is worth more than many advertisements, but the paragraphs can rarely be secured without the advertisements appearing. It is best for one or two men of influence to interview the managers of the papers, lay out to them the plan of campaign, explain that a certain sum of money is to be set aside for advertising, and ask for the insertion of pithy, newsy paragraphs prior to the Mission. This can generally be secured,

and if someone with a little knowledge of the work is set aside to do it, then appropriate matter can be written and supplied and will appear in due course.

The value of big posters is also very considerable. Some men think their districts are not influenced by such things, but it remains a fact that all human beings are affected by suggestion, and prominent posters, with facts constantly staring people in the face, and the bill not too crowded with matter, brand their message into the minds of people and influence them more than they know. Leave minor details to small handbills, which shall be delivered from door to door and given personally, when possible, to each householder with a special word of invitation backing it up. Use all means to notify every resident of what is going forward, but leave the intensive work to the last two weeks, for life is so crowded that people forget dates.

It is often thought that country districts, where news travels fast, do not need anything in the way of large posters; but this is a mistake. The appearance of striking bills in the countryside at once forms a topic of conversation and it also arouses interest and curiosity. It is a great thing to arouse a whole country district, with its villages and towns. Country people will travel farther to such meetings than any city-dweller would dream of doing; for

one thing they have more time, if the meetings are arranged for the slack season of the year, and such services are so rare that they are glad to attend them. If ever the Church thoroughly awakens to the peculiar importance of ministering to the spiritual needs of the people in the country it will have found one of the richest fields for solid work of a permanent and far-reaching character that it has at its disposal. The country feeds the towns with people as well as food, and the greatest hope of purifying city life is to purify the life flowing into it.

Having appointed committees of reliable people, the various details of the Mission should be handed over to them. For example, the inquiry room will need workers; their number and personality will be decided after the wishes of the missionary have been ascertained. But in any case workers are needed. Every inquirer's name, address, church preference and age (if under sixteen) should be taken. Even if the cards used register all this, still an inquiry room secretary should be appointed to superintend the work of the committee, and to enter all details of every name into a book. Cards may get lost, ministers may wish to know who have come forward, and a book is easy to consult, and a permanent record for follow-up work is essential. Keep all cranks off the inquiry room committee, and see that those on duty each night are empowered to

guard the room from their invasion. There are always dangerous people eager to get among the new converts. Mormons, Russellites, and the like find a happy hunting ground here, and by discovering names and addresses, obtain information to help them in their work of proselytising. There are others also, who are keen on thrusting forward some pet doctrine, and their presence and sometimes their noise does positive harm to those who have come forward. This will be dealt with more fully in the next chapter.

Every detail in connection with the Mission is important. The advertising, the music, the sidesmen, the finance, the lighting and airing of the building and all such things should be seen to by those specially appointed. No one man ought to be allowed to have too much to see to, as small details are apt to be overlooked, and these sometimes make all the difference. If hymn sheets are not to be found, if the building is not open and lit to time, if the collection is bungled, if the matter of the organist or pianist has not been arranged, if the inquiry room has not enough pencils or ink, it causes confusion and delay. Everything should be so organised beforehand that the arrangements will go forward like a piece of perfect machinery. It is God's work, and he who slurs such work is lacking in a sense of fitness and reverence. No detail is

too small to plan and carry out carefully, and the missionary ought not to be troubled needlessly.

The question of music can be decided according to the taste of the evangelist. One thing is sure, no one ought to be asked to sing solos unless their lives are consecrated to God's work. Moreover, as far as a choir is concerned, if it contains those who have no sense of the dignity of worship, and who chatter and laugh, then it is a hindrance, and a volley of eyes at the front of the church is likely to prevent the coming forward of timid seekers. The ideal thing is to have a fine body of singers who are willing to be in the front pews to lead the singing, their presence being more helpful there than anywhere else. If the building fills up during the Mission, then they can occupy the choir seats, for by that time the spirit of the work will have influenced all of them, and most likely many of their number will have been converted. Some evangelists like a large choir, others like none, some like a soloist, others do not, but, whichever it is, the man who conducts the meetings should make the final decision, as music affects some speakers very considerably and may make all the difference between success and failure.

One of the places which derives the most benefit from a good Mission is a scattered country district, whether it be in Britain or in the sparsely populated

farming areas of the Dominions. The diversions in such places are few, and to build up a really earnest religious community is of inestimable value. Many of the young people will eventually find their way to more populous places, and it is most important that they shall be won for Christ before the new surroundings are entered upon. Home life here is a real thing, and every Christian man and woman counts for a lot. Every conversion is spoken about all through the countryside, and the knowledge that this will be so makes it a hard step to take. People living under these conditions become set, self-conscious, and very sensitive about the opinions of others, and the regular pastoral work done amongst them is most far-reaching in its results. It is not so much the gift of preaching which counts as the gift of personality, for the minister is everything to them. Regular conversions are not generally seen, as it takes something akin to a spiritual upheaval to move the unconverted to dare take such a step. Everyone knows them, everyone will be watching them, the fear of not living up to it, the very publicity of the thing, combine to make them shrink from an avowal which they may be secretly wishing to make. Such people are the most faithful friends in the world; in a time of danger they are as brave as lions, and their code of honour in some things is so high that the

doings of certain city cousins who live by their wits are unintelligible to them. To win such magnificent men and women to open allegiance to Christ is to bring prizes into the Kingdom. Many scattered populations have sent men of untold worth into the ministry and Mission Field, and will continue to do so. They produce men and women of grit and conviction, untainted by the early association with the sin, smut and slimness of the city. Such as Elijah are the product of the open, free, glorious country.

But a whole country district can be moved by a Mission when the time is ripe. Here organisation is a simple thing. A gifted brother minister called in to assist is the ideal, especially if he can sing as well as preach. His coming will be discussed for a month or two before his arrival. The Mission should be held when the farmers are not very busy, so that the men as well as women may freely attend. The pastor will prepare the way by suitable sermons, he will visit and pray with the people, and get them praying and expecting too. Then comes the appointed time, and although at first there is a shyness and a diffidence which is painfully apparent, if the missionary knows the temperament of the people to whom he has come, the work will go steadily on. Most likely he will go around with their pastor during the day, visiting the people and praying with them. Then after a few nights'

apparent failure some well-known young man or woman will come to the front, then another, and the whole place talks about it. Then comes a night when several profess conversion and the real steady harvest begins. Reserve is broken down, great and eternal decisions are made, the whole church is enriched, and many are led to take their first step in a life which will lead them into Christian service. To be in such a country Mission is an experience which can never be forgotten. Every time it is recalled the heart grows tender, and all arguments against evangelism fall unheeded against the armour of actual knowledge. Happy is the minister who prepares for and carries through such a time of spiritual harvest. It is work which the angels might well covet. But as with all good things, it must not be overdone, or reaction will set in, and that is fatal.

In spite of the custom of some evangelists, it is desirable that there should be no personal work going on in the meetings of a Mission. Immediately the evangelist gives the invitation for seekers to come forward, it has been customary for a band of personal workers to pass through the congregation speaking to people, inquiring about their spiritual condition and inviting the unconverted to come forward. When this is done promiscuously it does incalculable harm. No doubt cases can be brought

forward of conversions having been secured in this way, but it is also true that more harm than good is done by such a method. No matter how carefully the personal workers are chosen, there is a most undesirable class of people who always take advantage of such an opening to get to work. It is impossible for the visiting evangelist to know who such people are, and even when chosen by the ministers themselves it always happens that pushing, tactless busybodies manage to get into this work. Further than that, even if everyone chosen were a person of splendid character, a large part of the audience seriously object to the approach of a stranger inquiring about their spiritual lives. Many who have come to worship quietly and reverently are annoyed and distressed, and moreover many of those whom it is necessary to attract to such meetings will never come near the place if they expect to be accosted and cross-examined.

Personal work should be done before, or after, but not during the meetings. When it is done it should be by someone who has a point of contact with the one spoken to. A Sunday School teacher visiting a scholar, a friend walking home with a friend may tactfully broach the subject of personal decision. The fact that a Mission is in progress gives the topic for conversation, and often creates a right atmosphere. Then again, if proper pre-

paration has been made for the Mission, special prayer has been offered for the presence of the Holy Spirit in the meetings, so after the message has been delivered there must be no interference with His working. God's promises are clear and He will do His part when we have done our part. Therefore stand aside and see the Salvation of our God, for when He works men and women are brought to decision and are led to make confession before God and man.

A possible exception may be made to this rule in special circumstances which will not disturb the meeting or annoy anyone. Someone sitting near an unconverted friend, having good reason for knowing that timidity may be keeping back an open declaration, may indicate a willingness to go forward with him for company if that will help; no interference, but just an intimation of readiness to help, if such is desired; beyond that nothing should be done.

If, however, this statement is not agreed with and it is decided that there shall be personal workers moving in and out of the seats speaking to the people, this should be clearly indicated as the course which is about to be pursued, so that if there are any present who do not wish to be spoken to they may leave the building if they so desire.

Speaking after intimate experience under a variety

of famous evangelists, and after the personal conducting of evangelistic work for many years, it is here stated, without the slightest qualification, that indiscriminate personal dealing in evangelistic meetings has done more to bring evangelism into disrepute than any other one thing. It ultimately becomes a medium for forcing results and swelling numbers, and thus names are sent to ministers of those who cannot be found when sought for, or when found prove to be valueless. At all costs, and in spite of the storm which this statement may raise in certain quarters, it is repeated here with emphasis—have no connection with such work, and never allow it in meetings under your care, or you will be helping to antagonise the new generation and cripple effective evangelism.

CHAPTER XIV

WORK IN THE INQUIRY ROOM

THE method of work in the Inquiry Room will always be decided by the ideas and experience of the evangelist controlling the Mission. What is suggested in this chapter is the usual course pursued in Missions conducted under "The New Life Campaign." If this is found helpful by those embarking on the work of effective evangelism, then the chapter will have done what was required.

The Inquiry Room should be the best room available, and if possible close to the door which enters the church near the pulpit, so that when those making their decision are standing in front of the communion rail, during the singing of a hymn or during the closing voluntary, they can be taken quite easily into the room without having to face the inquisitive eyes of people in the church. It should be well warmed, otherwise, after the heated church, a cold atmosphere may produce a bad effect both physically and spiritually. It must always be remembered that those coming forward have been under a severe nervous strain, and consequently

will be sensitive to anything like a chill. The room should be furnished with a number of tables—or, better still, one or two long tea-meeting tables—on which will be placed several small bottles of ink, a number of good pens and well-sharpened pencils, together with sheets of blotting paper of good quality. The tables will be surrounded by chairs and there must be clear light.

Those appointed to attend to the Inquiry Room work should be the best available. If ministers are co-operating in the Mission, these ought to form the chief helpers in this room. Spirituality, tact, sympathy, an utter absence of fussiness or officiousness, should be the mark of all present to assist. The women should attend to the women and girls, while the men and boys will be helped by the men. Let this be the general rule always. All signs of hysteria in any of the seekers should be instantly discouraged, and if any of them evidence uncontrolled emotion they should at once be taken to a separate room and be attended to there. The days when weeping was general among those coming forward have passed, and let it be said that, except in rare cases, if the meeting has been conducted in a sensible way there will be no display of uncontrolled emotion. This is a healthy sign, and makes instruction easier and more likely to be intelligently grasped.

The work of the Inquiry Room is the most important of the Mission, and unless the evangelist desires it otherwise this should be left to him, as proper instruction is rarely given by those who have had no training in this delicate task. There are always many who wish to assist the inquirers, but if the evangelist asks for this to be done by specially appointed people, let those who are responsible for the Mission be exceedingly careful as to whom they select. The pushing of pet doctrines is a weakness of many who volunteer to instruct inquirers, and this means that the vital work of the moment is not done. It is a severe tax on the evangelist to do it himself, but he ought to undertake it, unless he feels he cannot bear the strain.

The custom of getting those who come forward to kneel, and then for a worker to kneel beside each one for the purpose of instructing them and praying with them, is open to very adverse criticism, although at one time it was almost universally adopted. It plays upon the emotions, it adds to the embarrassment of those already taxed quite sufficiently, and it leaves the person at the mercy of an instructor who may not be qualified, or may be dealing with subjects which at this stage are not essential. Then, again, a number being attended to in the same room by various helpers makes it

certain that the room will be filled with noise, and this is distinctly undesirable, and limits efficiency. Common sense is required here, as well as in anything else, and past customs must not be allowed to hinder the adoption to-day of a plan which has been found to produce excellent results.

If the evangelist desires to give the address in the Inquiry Room, then all should be in readiness for him when he reaches the room. Probably he will stay a few minutes in the building where the meeting is held, for there may be some who at the last moment wish to come and register their decision. After the Benediction the workers will conduct the inquirers to the room where everything has been put in order beforehand, and the one in charge will invite them to sit at the tables, on which decision cards will be spread. The card used by the New Life Campaign is reproduced here. It was made of thin, tough paper, perforated down the middle, and was eight inches by five inches, so that when torn through the perforation, the converts and the Secretary each had a portion four inches by five inches.

The great benefit of the perforated card is apparent. The one registering his decision has a signed card which he will keep as a reminder of the great step he has taken, while the secretary has the information in his hand which he is going to post on to the

New Life Campaign.

Information Card.

Please keep the Decision Form and return this half to

Rev. Lionel B. Fletcher,

or to one of the workers of the Campaign.

I have signed the resolution acknowledging myself as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Name (Mr., Mrs., or Miss)

Address

Age (if under 16)

Church Preferred

Date of Decision



REV. LIONEL B. FLETCHER.

By the Grace of God, I now definitely and deliberately accept the Lord Jesus as my Saviour and Master, and I surrender myself to Him in order to become His disciple. I trust Him henceforth to save and keep me.

Name

Date of Decision

"Him that cometh unto Me
I will in no wise cast out."

New Life Campaign

**The Great
Decision.**

minister of the church preferred, after he has entered the name and other details in his permanent book.

The worker in charge will ask those sitting at the table to fill in the left-hand side of the card with lead pencil, tear it off and pass it to him. The evangelist then comes into the room to find that all cards are filled in and everything is ready for him. Taking a card in his hand, he then goes carefully into the reason why they are there. It is a good thing to get all present to read aloud in unison the words of the Great Decision. That having been done, the evangelist can explain it point by point. No pains should be spared to bring home all the points entailed in conversion, and the fact that through Jesus Christ we become members of the family of God. Having done this, the words of the Great Decision can be summarised and each one asked individually: "Do you with all your heart and soul here and now accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour?"

If anyone replies, "I will try," it gives the speaker an opportunity of showing the difference between "Trying" and "Trusting," for it is imperative that each should realise that it is through trusting the new life is entered upon, and then they must go forth to try their best to bring honour to their Master, but even if they fail, He will not fail. This will help many fearful hearts to see that one of their chief difficulties is removed. A child may try, and

fail, but the loving parent does not cast it out, but will encourage it again and again. Will not our Heavenly Father do even more for us than an earthly parent?

It is very important that the new converts should be urged to begin Bible study and daily prayer at once. With this end in view it is advisable to suggest some book with which they may begin. For example, if the Gospel of John is the book chosen for daily reading, they might begin that night by reading a part of the first chapter, marking the twelfth verse in remembrance of the fact that they have consciously claimed their right to become the children of God.

The evangelist should say something to the effect that, if any have a particular difficulty, or are not clear on any point, or cannot go away with the glad assurance that the Christian life has been entered upon, he would be glad for them to stay behind and have conversation with him. Then should follow a prayer, aloud, and in unison, the meeting being concluded by commending them to the keeping of Christ.

In some churches, especially in country districts, there is no room which can be used for the inquirers. This must not be allowed to interfere with the careful instruction of those coming forward. Satisfactory work can be done in the most trying circumstances, especially if all details are attended to, so that

inconvenience is minimised as much as possible. Immediately the Benediction is pronounced, ask the congregation to disperse as quickly and quietly as possible, and impress upon them the necessity of going right away from the building, instead of standing about talking, as any noise will interrupt the work in hand. If relatives or friends of those who have come forward desire to remain, as is sometimes the case, they can sit reverently at the back of the church. The seekers can then occupy the front pews, and here it may be found better for the workers to fill in the information cards, as they may thus save a lot of time. In fact, even in an inquiry room, it is often better for the workers to write down the information required on the cards, as some are very nervous, or are slow writers. The actual signing of the Great Decision will be done in ink by the converts themselves at the close of the address and prayer.

So make all arrangements that confusion shall be avoided. If the inquirers have to be kept in the same building as the congregation, while the people are dispersing, see that the organist plays some hymn or devotional selection so that the noise will not detract from the influence of the meeting.

This work is most important, so allow nothing to hinder it being done well. Difficulties are made to be overcome, and there is always a way by which

they may be overcome. Insist on decorum and reverence in all circumstances. All good people do not possess a sense of reverence, but there are always those upon whom anything akin to irreverence jars most painfully. Let the evangelist always do the work of God as he would if he could see the Christ standing in the building watching him. Evangelism has not always earned a name for reverent orderliness, but there is no reason why the surroundings of an evangelistic service should not be as reverent and helpful as the surroundings of a cathedral service. Therefore do the work of an evangelist with a deep sense of the responsibility which rests upon you, and when it is seen that God's gentlemen are employed in this service of the King, evangelism will commend itself to many who at present hold aloof.

The evangelist will frequently be asked for private interviews, as there are always those who have personal difficulties which they want to talk about. In such cases he will often need all the common sense he can muster to help him in the advice which he is to offer. In the varied experiences which will be unveiled to him he will find how complex the relationships of life are, and many problems will be propounded which need careful thought and time for prayer before a satisfactory solution can be found. The future happiness, or misery, of lives will depend on some of his answers, therefore he

must patiently listen to all that is said, and go thoroughly into the details, so that every essential circumstance shall be put before him.

Experience will soon aid him to discern those who are morbid, or unbalanced in mind, and often a kindly word of encouragement will satisfy such people. With others he will need to be very firm, and, although never forgetting that he is there as a servant of his Lord, he must keep at a distance all who by a gushing sentimentalism would thrust themselves upon his company with persistent frequency.

The assistance of a sensible Christian woman of middle age ought to be obtained so as to prevent any possibility of private interviews with women or girls who seek confidential advice. There are often neurotic people who crave sensation, and the simplest way of dealing with them is to give them to understand that there is a capable, sympathetic and absolutely trustworthy lady present who will gladly give them what spiritual advice may be needed. If this is declined and a private talk demanded, then it is as well to grant that at once, but insist that the lady referred to must be in the room. If this is also declined, then invite another minister to be present, and if the one seeking the interview refuses, then her request should also be refused. These generally have their own ministers

who are quite willing to help them, but the advent of a new personality is always attractive to them, as their weakness is shown in their desire to make morbid confessions, or to ask advice about very trivial matters.

Especially to young evangelists it may be said with blunt frankness that it is highly undesirable to grant a private interview to women. The special circumstances of the occasion are attended by special dangers, and no consideration must be allowed to alter this decision. Beyond the courteous treatment which every gentleman should show to every woman it is not right to go. Better be rude than a fool. The most dangerous situations arise through failing to provide for them beforehand. A practical, spiritually minded middle-aged woman, always in attendance to help in confidential and delicate cases, is one of the most valuable appointments an evangelist can make for his Inquiry Room work.

A decided attitude ought to be taken up regarding any letters which may be received seeking advice. No specious argument can change this unvarnished truth, that the majority of women who write for the advice of a visitor should be referred to their own minister's wife for help. If the evangelist has his own wife with him, then all difficulties of this kind disappear. She will find some are genuinely anxious for help, but a proportion of them are

dangerous sensationalists. The former can be helped, but the latter need medical advice more than spiritual.

In all things guard the honour of your calling with jealous care, and never by act or word depart from the maintenance of the highest standard of dignified Christian conduct which should mark every strong man of God.

CHAPTER XV

GARNERING THE HARVEST

UNLESS an evangelist uses highly sensational methods, whereby undue emotionalism is produced in his hearers, he is not responsible for the well-being of the converts after he has handed them over to the oversight of others. Their future progress depends upon the care which is taken of them, and the instruction which is given to them, and that is the business of the churches to which they belong.

If the work has been taken seriously, the minister will at once set about preparing them for church membership and Christian service. This will mean a severe drain on time and energy, but all Christian service thoroughly done is exacting. It must be entered upon immediately, for any delay will produce a crop of difficulties. Sometimes a minister will go for a holiday at the close of the Mission which has been held in his church, but this is a fatal mistake. Whatever other church duties are temporarily set aside at this time, the shepherding of the new recruits must not be neglected. They are experi-

encing new visions of spiritual beauty, they are facing new temptations, they are filled with a new and overwhelming purpose, and in this stage they are like white-hot metal which is ready for the moulding hammer to shape it for its future work. If they are allowed to cool down before they are taken in hand a priceless opportunity will have passed and disappointment will follow.

Within a few days of their profession of conversion they should be gathered together to meet the many friends and helpers by whom they are surrounded. The very youngest of them should be cared for. A child's decision may seem to be of little importance, but children feel keenly and deeply, and, if nurtured with the degree of wisdom and patience which their age demands, will repay the attention given to them by a steady development in Christian character.

A good plan is to send each convert a letter bearing on the Christian life. This should be posted, and not delivered by hand. Many people get few letters, and everyone values a letter which comes through the post more highly than a letter delivered privately. If there are a large number of letters to write, copies can be made at a slight expense, and it is certainly worth doing. In the envelope may be placed a card of invitation to a gathering of the new converts. If one night does not suit

everyone, then for those unable to attend an extra meeting must be held. No one should be missed on any account, and if some are still absent when the extra meeting is held they must be visited at once.

In all these cases let the visitor see the convert personally, and alone; if this is impossible the visitor ought to arrange to meet the convert again in more favourable circumstances. Some young people who desire to live the Christian life are unfortunately placed. One may be the maid in a house with an unsympathetic mistress, and the latter may speak of all sorts of faults possessed by the girl; she may have faults, but she has professed a desire to be a Christian, and it is the visitor's duty to treat that profession as seriously as she would the profession of anyone else. Another may have unfortunate home surroundings, where religion finds no welcome. Many irreligious people consider themselves the best judges of what real religion is, hence a fault-finding mother will glibly criticise the action of her children and pour cold water on the prospect of their ever becoming Christians. The best way is to listen to all such talk, but at the same time stick to the original intention, and get that convert alone as soon as possible.

The private interview will be the opportunity for an invitation to attend some class of instruction

which has been arranged. It will show the convert that there is sympathy and help in the church, that there is someone who cares, and that there is encouragement to go forward. Do not preach to a young convert at this interview; the main object is to win the confidence of the one visited, and to show a sincere and warm desire to render help. Get each one to join some regular means of grace, and never rest content until that is achieved, and the quicker the work is put in hand the surer will be the success of the effort.

In some places the new recruits are gathered at a social evening at which the older members of the church have an opportunity of speaking words of friendship and welcome. If they are assembled in this way, it should be a distinctly spiritual meeting. There should be ample provision made for singing the hymns which have become favourites during the Mission; and a suitable speaker (or speakers) should be selected, and the addresses ought to be brief and to the point, extending hearty encouragement to those present. This affords an ideal place for outlining plans for future work. Bible classes, Christian Endeavour Societies, preparation classes for church membership, all of them or any of them having been decided upon, nights for meetings should there and then be arranged, and the converts enrolled for whichever they prefer to join. Here

also some appropriate book, chosen as a help in the first stages of the Christian life, might with advantage be given to each one. If by reason of poverty any have not a Bible, this can soon be ascertained and the need supplied. Never give a cheap Bible with poor print to anyone, least of all to a young convert. An attractive binding and good type will so please the owner that the regular study of the book of books will follow.

It is a serious mistake to think that new converts will want a series of entertainments. If the work of conversion is real, the heart of each will be on fire with a passionate desire to know more of Christ and to work for Him, and this must be encouraged. Older Christians sometimes smile at their enthusiasm and say: "You will cool down presently; I was like that at first but I soon settled down." This is a deplorable standpoint for anyone to take up. Settling down often means stagnation, and stagnation is death. Whereas it is often impossible to put fire into a cold, calculating Christian who has settled down, those who have just surrendered themselves to Christ present unbounded possibilities for aggressive work and for delightful character-building. The elder brother was angry because the house was full of music when the prodigal came home; and there are elder brothers to-day. The Rev. Samuel Chadwick has asked, "What would have happened

to the prodigal when he came home if only his elder brother had been there to greet him?" Let the house be full of music for the home-coming, and let the fire burn and the feast progress, for every one of them represents the possibility of a future of promise. Missionaries, Ministers, Sunday School teachers, saintly men of business, Christian politicians, worthy parents, and mighty men and women of God for all stations in life are badly needed. Your particular band of converts will produce some of these, if their welcome is warm and their surroundings are congenial.

When a baby is born into a house where it finds a welcome, everything possible is done for its comfort. If it is sick the house is full of anxiety; when it laughs and crows, every member of the household smiles in sympathy. When it cuts its first tooth, there is subdued excitement. When it says its first word, all know about it and exclaim with pleasure. All want to help its baby feet to walk, and its every doing is narrated and rejoiced over. Its future schooling is planned long ahead, and the possibility of certain professions is kept in view years before it gives any indication of scholarship.

Are not Christ's babes to be cared for in much the same manner? Their growth will be on the same gradual lines, but it will be just as sure, if the attention they receive is as sensible and unremit-

ting. You would not feed a baby on puff paste, therefore do not expect young Christians to become spiritually strong on entertainments. Put them at once into surroundings where the deepest spiritual life within them may be cultivated; where they will be taught to study and understand the Bible; where they will learn to express their inward thoughts in public prayer and testimony; where they will learn to speak and lead a meeting. Instruction and service should go hand in hand. All children want to be doing something, and this is wonderfully true of spiritual children; it claims their activities, develops their powers, and gives them an object in life. The church which sets its converts to work will never have to trouble about numbers falling away, for work generates health. Their activities may irritate some of the sedate, conventional, hate-to-be-disturbed people in the church, but that will not do any harm. A baby crying or crowing always gets on the nerves of someone, but its mother loves it, and a child who disturbs no one in its younger days rarely achieves much in its older days. Watch a flock of sheep walking across a field. The old ones are sedate enough, and walk slowly after each other as if going to a funeral, but the lambs are frolicking up on the hillside. They rush here, there, and everywhere, kicking their heels up in the air, butting each other, galloping back to the flock and

away again. This is as it should be. If the owner saw a lamb walking slowly behind the flock, while the others played, he would know that something was wrong and would be anxious to bring it back to normal.

There are several good ways of building up the spiritual life of those needing help, some of which need no explanation. For example, a well-conducted Bible class, led by the minister or a layman who has the ability and the time to devote to it, is an excellent thing. A minister's class, which shall provide Bible study, and in which shall be taught the meaning and implications of church membership, is also often carried on with good results. In such a class, or in the Bible class, questions and informal conversation concerning Christian living should be encouraged; in this way many problems can be thrashed out and difficulties in individual lives dealt with.

Many people have a prejudice against the Christian Endeavour movement, but when these prejudices are thoroughly examined it is generally found that they are groundless. It is useless saying the teaching given is thin or shallow. There is no set teaching connected with that world-wide movement; its constitution leaves every society free to provide what is required by the spiritual condition of the members, and this is one of its chief assets. Loyalty to the

person of Jesus Christ and His Church are the only essentials of Active Membership, and its Associate Membership allows all who wish to attend and seriously enjoy the meetings without any decided profession of conversion to do so, and thus from these members converts are regularly obtained. The Society embodies in an admirable way all the good points of a Methodist Class Meeting, the characteristics of a Bible class, the atmosphere and accompaniments of a Prayer meeting, together with provision for the social side of young life and active Christian service for every member. Its critics may have had unfortunate experiences, but all such must have arisen through the fault of the churches. In most cases they handed over to the wrong people the supervision of the work of these Societies. Such people would leave the impress of their personality on whatever organisation they had in hand, therefore it would be the choice of the leaders and not necessarily the organisation which would be at fault. There is a great revival of the Christian Endeavour movement throughout the world, because nothing which has arisen since its inception has been able to take its place. Perhaps the past mistakes in this, as in evangelism, will result in a wiser oversight in the future. The possibilities of these Societies, both Junior and Senior, for Christian tuition and service are unlimited, and if the minister

will throw himself heart and soul into the life of his Society he will find in it one of the best known means of keeping, enriching and using his converts. There are more men in the ministry and Mission Field to-day who are the product of the Christian Endeavour Society than can be calculated, and it is practically certain that no other movement of the past generation has done more to produce workers than this noble offspring of the Christian Church.

Having arranged these necessary weekly meetings, it is of great assistance to the development of young Christians, and also to the health of the church, to form something in the nature of a Mission Band or Gospel Band; but the name does not matter in the slightest—its value is in what it stands for and creates. If their energies are not utilised to the full, the church will be the poorer, and at the same time openings are given to the various fantastic sects to recruit their ranks at its expense. Young people who are on fire with zeal demand work, and if something is not found for them to do, they will either lose their enthusiasm and vision, or they will be attracted by the activities of the many aggressive sects which are to be found established in every country. We may laugh at the cranky notions of people who find pleasure in the propagation of all kinds of weird religious theories, but their strength lies in their genius for setting everyone to work

whom they lay hold of. The persistent activity which they evince makes a strong appeal to the vigour of youth, especially if contrasted with the phlegmatic and formal religion of many ordinary Christians.

It is natural that the restlessness of young people should demand an outlet, and the church which harnesses this up for constructive work and directs it by diplomatic oversight will reap new help for itself, and also find that it is training men for the ministry and the Mission Field. An energetic lay-preacher can be placed in charge of this band, if the minister cannot see to it himself, and it will consist of young men and young women who shall be enlisted for a definite aim. Their rallying time can be Saturday night, if such is suitable, when a very informal meeting for praise and prayer will be held. It can be stated that this meeting is chiefly for young Christians desiring to be trained in public prayer and to speak on religious subjects. Any older people who may wish to attend will be told quite clearly that they must not monopolise the meeting with long prayers or weary addresses. If they do not observe this rule, then they must be told quite frankly and kindly that it will be better for them to stay away. No matter what the cost, this meeting must be made the training ground for young people and nothing should interfere with that.

In the more congenial months this band will help in open-air services, and there is no better school for the teaching of direct and compelling speech. If there are good speakers arranged for the open-air meetings, there is also nearly always time for one or two young men to speak for five minutes. Another might take the reading, offer a short prayer or announce a hymn. It is good for them to try their voices, and to get used to facing a crowd. The others will feel they are doing something worth while by leading the singing or handing out hymn sheets, and there are always such jobs as carrying the little organ and the speakers' platform which they will gladly do, and in this way the fire is kept burning.

Then again there are always mission churches and village churches which are glad to be visited by such a band. Led by a capable man, who will be responsible for conducting the service, a group of young people going to the church creates interest. Half a dozen of them can take part each time by rendering a solo or two, a quartet, or a rousing chorus, which will prove a welcome addition to meetings in these places; three or four young men dividing the service between them is an innovation which many people like. Speaking after a connection with several bands of this kind, it can be said that there are numbers of men in the Christian

ministry who had their first encouragement to work, and received their first training, under conditions like these. It is remarkable how much undiscovered talent there is amongst the young people of our churches, and it will never be discovered and utilised until they are challenged and trained to do active and regular work for Christ. Men who have no chance of entering the water do not learn to swim.

The great lesson which all Christians must be taught is that they are saved to serve. If their salvation is real it will issue in the dedicating of their lives to bringing salvation to others. They will in this way gain an ever-widening vision of the possibilities of such service, until at last the application of their Christianity will become the daily habit of their lives. If evangelism can thus send regular streams of enriched personalities into the world, not only will the churches feel a new vitalising breath, but society in general will be purified and elevated. God wants men in business, and in the professions, who will apply the Gospel of Christ to the problems which face them, as well as men in the ministry and the Mission Field. It is the business of the Church therefore, through effective evangelism, to win new recruits and to train them, that through them the coming of the Kingdom of God may be hastened.

CHAPTER XVI

LET THE WHOLE LINE ADVANCE

THIS concluding chapter is written to sound forth afresh a famous General's command. The way to victory is not to be found in perpetuating disagreements, forcing arguments or emphasising differences, but by closing up the ranks of the army of God, and answering by obedience the challenging order : " Let the whole line advance."

The winter of 1922-1923 has brought an increasing volume of news concerning great spiritual movements throughout the British Isles. Every part of the land has, in some measure, had a share of this. From Scotland, Ulster, and the Tyneside in the North, to East Anglia and Devonshire in the South, and Wales in the West, there has come news of gatherings at which many thousands have made profession of conversion, and tens of thousands have re-dedicated themselves to the service of Christ. Most of the counties have had some movement, even if in a proportion of cases it has been small, but from every direction come inquiries, and the expression of almost painful eagerness for the coming

of real revival. Behind all this have been the faithful prayers of God's people for many years, the faithful preaching of untold numbers of consecrated ministers, the self-sacrificing work of innumerable Sunday School teachers, and the influence of multitudes of devoted Christian parents throughout the land. But the evidences of blessing are with us, and without waiting to discuss the question of whether it is a widespread revival or not, it must be admitted that the days are propitious for concerted action.

After some experience in this work, and after a prayerful consideration of methods, several things seem quite clear, and they are recorded here in the earnest hope that all branches of the Christian Church will take advantage of the favourable conditions now presenting themselves.

Isolated evangelistic efforts are of benefit, but if the ministers and workers of a city or district would come together for conference and prayer, it might be that an aggressive movement could be inaugurated, carefully prepared for, and then developed and enthusiastically pushed forward over a given period. Suppose, for the sake of argument, it was decided to make the coming winter a time for this work. Arrangements could then be formulated by which the whole city, or district, would be concentrated upon during that time. The Tyneside revival of

January 1923 presents a good example to follow, although the details of organisation need not necessarily be slavishly adhered to. A great body of ministers, and other religious workers, could find amongst themselves those keen enough on this important work of God to go into it in such a way that, irrespective of denomination, every church willing to co-operate would have a special series of meetings held, either in its own building or in a building conveniently situated in which several denominations or congregations could unite. There need not be a Mission in each church, but if each minister would arrange a series of evangelistic services for his own church on consecutive Sunday nights at the time appointed it would be profitable.

United action thus taken could not fail to arouse the community, and whole centres of population would feel the effect of the work. Where a single Mission may have great results, but pass without really influencing any but those closely associated with it, such a movement as outlined above would be a series of movements within a prescribed area, and jointly they would produce an effect from which few could escape.

In cases where a whole county took up the movement it would have remarkable results, for it would include villages and towns in its sweep, provide energising work for thousands of Christians who are

eager to be doing something, and, if supported by united prayer, would let loose spiritual forces which would be incalculable. It is not a brief, spasmodic Mission in any one place that is pleaded for here, but the calling of the hosts of the Lord to battle for a definite, prolonged assault on entrenched evil and indifference. Many local interests would have to be set aside, many outside engagements by preachers would have to be declined, but if the work is worth doing it is worth paying the cost to achieve a result so vast and valuable. If this would lead to the establishment of fighting lines across Britain, working north or south, or both, it would command such attention from the Press and public that the work of reaching the outsider would be made easier and the whole nation would be influenced.

We have all sorts of organisations already constituted, and in working order, any one of which could take the initiative in this movement. Every denomination has its official Assembly, there are also Ministers' Fraternals in most large centres, and there are Free Church Councils throughout the land. If in any one place nothing is being done, the Ministers' Fraternal might set things on foot by sending a request to the various denominations to come together for conference on the matter, or in some other way which would be effective launch the scheme for consideration and prayer. It behoves

those who are anxious for this work to go forward, to prepare without delay, and by conversation or other communication interest others, for it is generally the eager minority which at last enthuses the more sluggish majority. Jonathan and his armour-bearer dared while the army dozed, but the outcome was to bring every available man into the conflict, which resulted in victory.

Why not attempt some such audacious plan in the name of our God? We have a Gospel great enough for the occasion, and we have hundreds of preachers able to lead, while tens of thousands in our churches are ready for the fray. Timidity is a handicapping quality which we have entertained too long. Let the nation ring with the Gospel challenge in the open air during the summer months, denominational leaders standing together on a common platform, and then as winter draws near let the open-air meetings merge into the more intensive work indoors.

Such a campaign would call into play the latent talents of the Churches, and many untried men would discover, to their astonishment, that they could conduct a Mission as easily—perhaps more easily—than they could do evangelistic work in their own churches. Away with discussions of feasibility, away with fears of finance; trust in God and go forward with a boldness and courage

which the Holy Spirit will delight to honour. The day of Britain's captivity to sin will end when the forces of Christ claim the land for their Master and plant the banner of the Cross on the ramparts of the nation whose Empire girdles the world. The children of the nation across the sea are hungry for news of revival at "Home," and are eagerly waiting to follow the lead of their beloved Motherland.

THE END

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